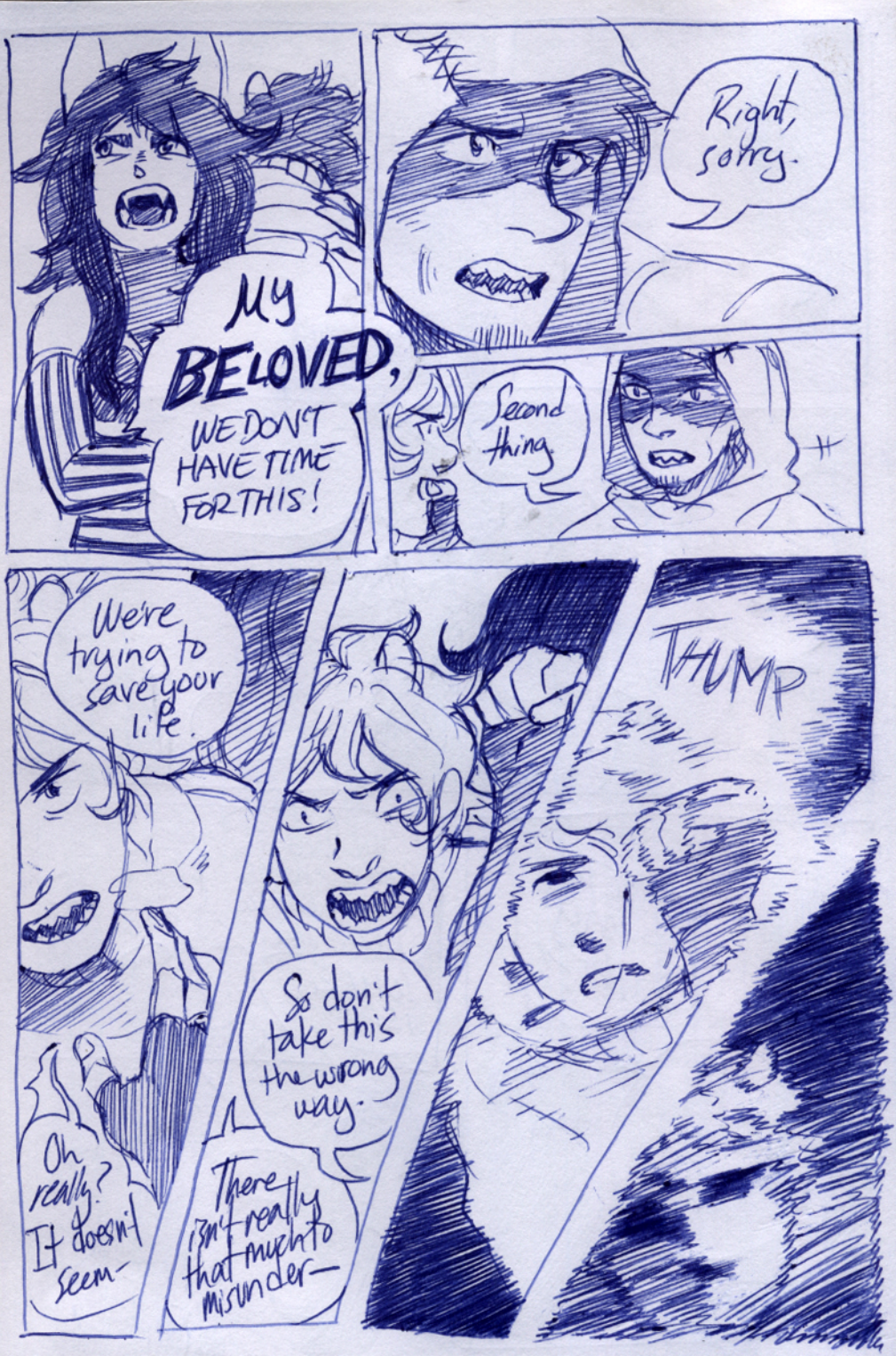
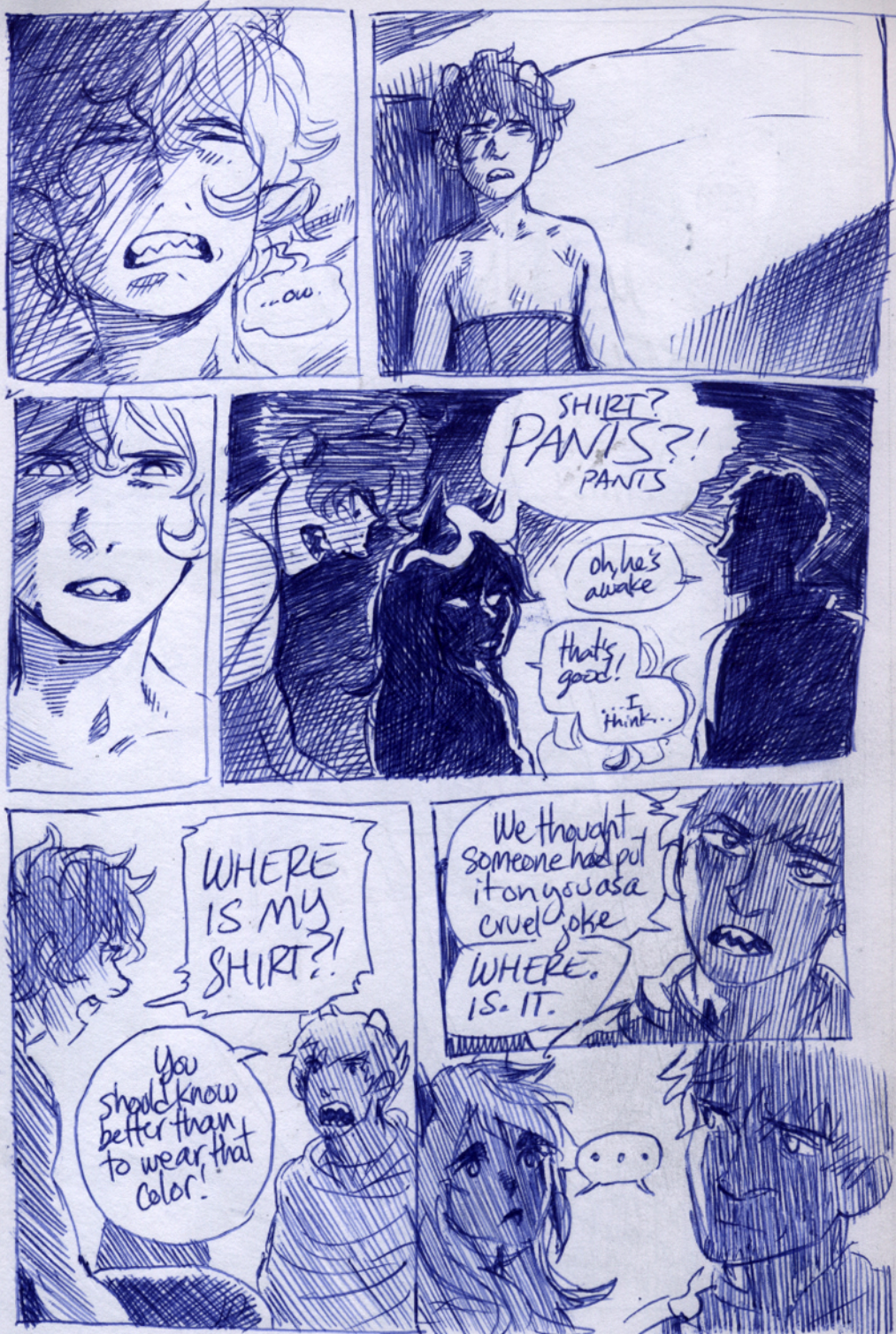

ghhh~
?
?
?
eaaake?
aAAAAAH!
Kid?
You can't stay here dressed that way.
Come with us.
NO!


After all, I don't know who you are or what your purposes are!
I don't think he understands
Well we need to make it so you aren't to?
And I am an unaccompanied minor in an unknown setting.
Which makes your rather, -ahem- forceful proposition rather suspicious, wouldn't you say?
Up we go!
Not to make any biased or baseless— uff!


LET ME GO RIGHT NOW!
Child, shut the fuck up— you're wearing bright aberrant red.
I don't know who
A-BERR-ANT?!!
KANKRI!
which is—


mmf!
Two things.
This is because they are constantly in fear of their imminent death.
Keep it short!
First trolls are busy as fuck.
They only sit and listen for five minutes at most.
So if you have something to say...
I like 6-to-8-word slogans.


MY BELOVED,
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!
Right, sorry.
Second thing.
We're trying to save your life.
Oh really? It doesn't seem—
So don't take this the wrong way.
There isn't really that much to misunder—
THUMP


...ow
SHIRT? PANIS?! PANTS
oh, he's awake
that's good! ...I think...
WHERE IS MY SHIRT?!
You should know better than to wear that color.
We thought someone had put it on you as a cruel joke
WHERE. IS. IT.


We burned it.
You...
So, was that shirt really important to you?
What? No!
...Owe me a new shirt! You not only removed my clothing without my permission but completely disrespected my right as a free Beforan troll to express my blood color, assigned at birth, not to mention your earlier use of the word aberant indicates strong off-spectrum hive bigotry which I expect you, in your hemo-anonymity, have

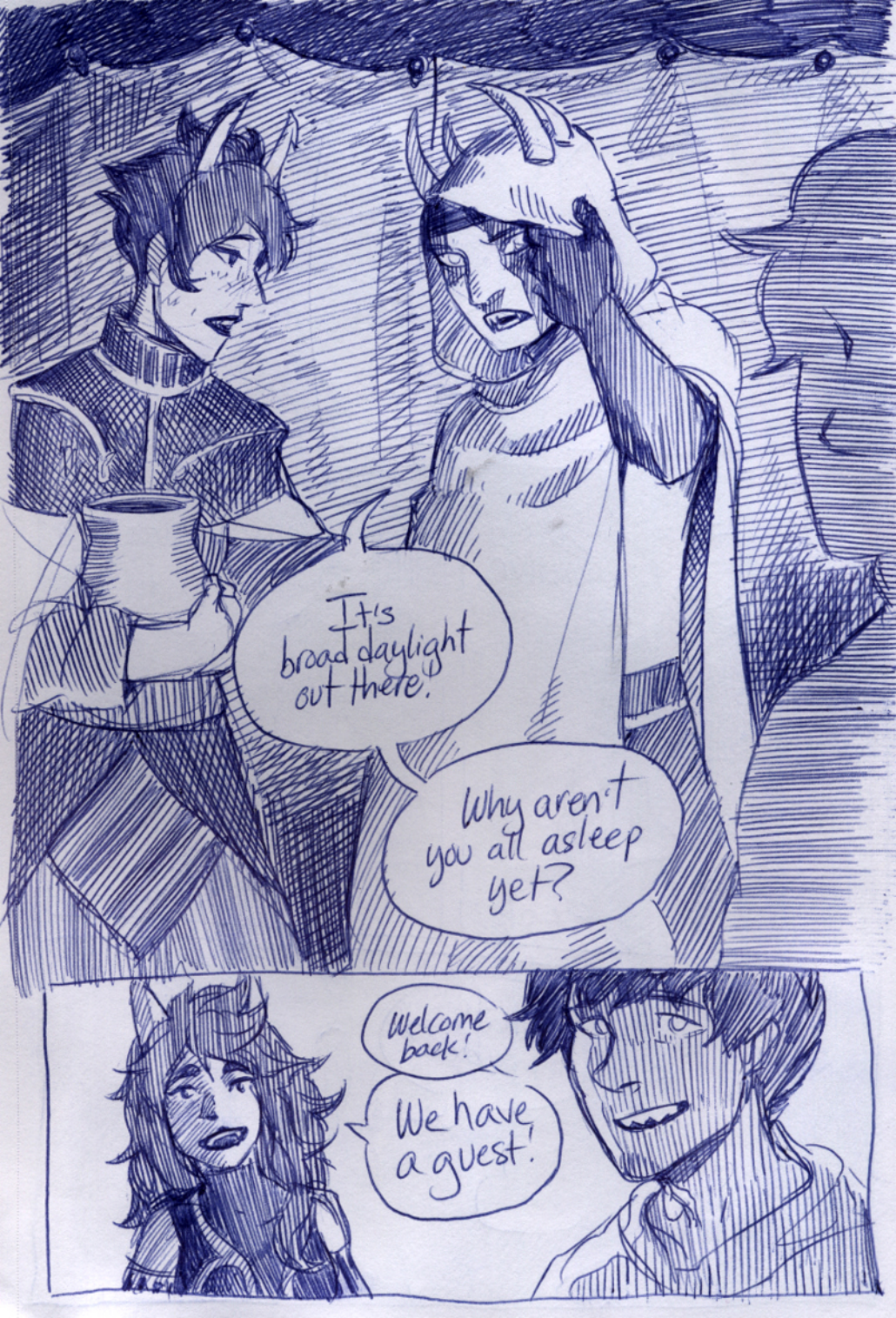

It's just something a rather uneducated and overbearing friend made me wear...
Sniff
...where are we?
Um...
Let's see.
Help?
Sylva Forest, I think.
Ah!
In Sylva Forest, near a greenblood settlement.

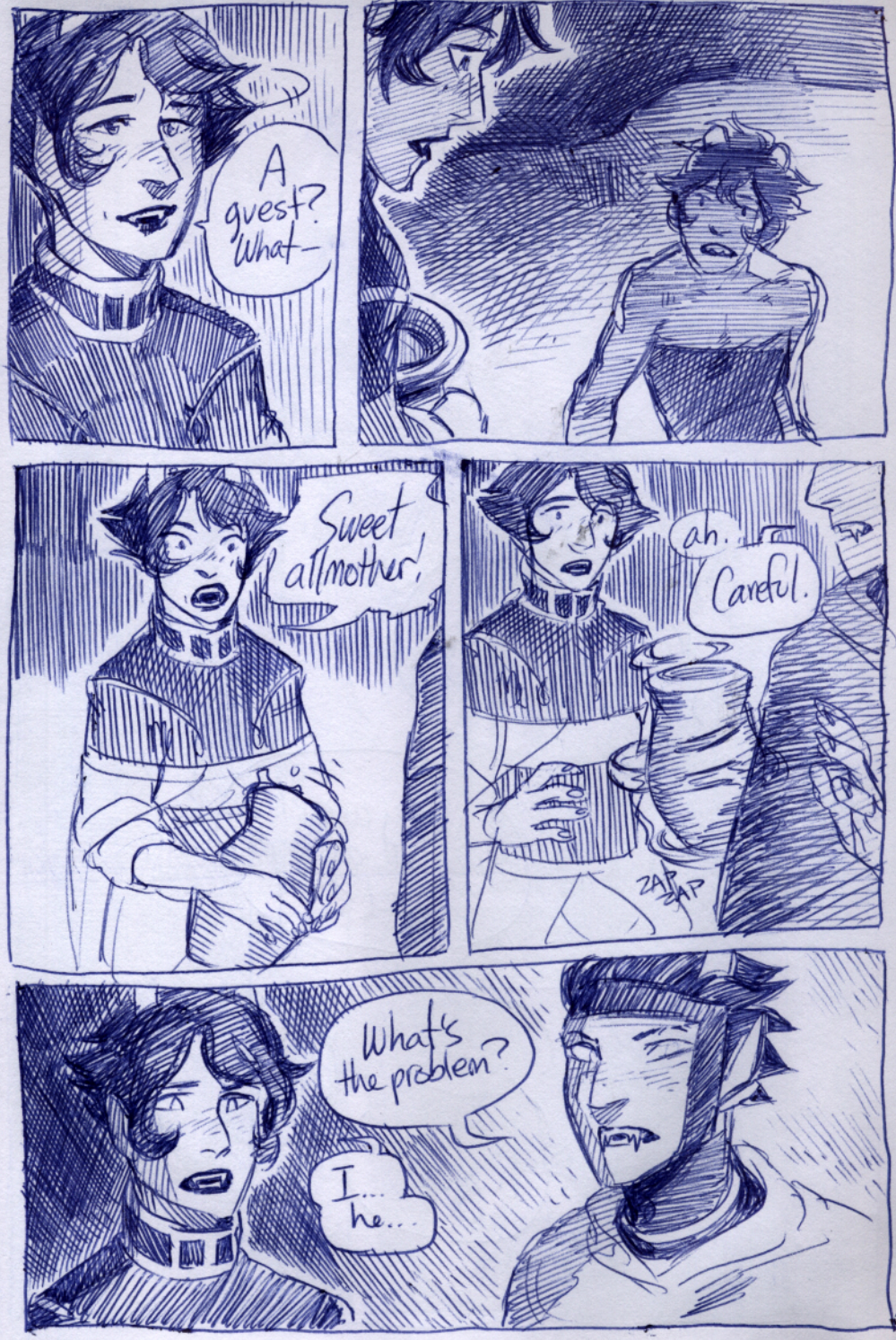

Does that sound familiar?
...okay.
I've never even heard of Silver Forest. And what exactly do you mean by "a settlem—
Syllva.
Huh what
Syllva. Someone basically decided to bestow upon it the name "tree forest."
Great huh?
Trust Alternia's geographers!
AHAHAHAHA!
hahaha...ha...?
...okay.
...'Alternia'?
...Alternia.
Al-ter-ni-a?
You had it the first time.


What country is that in?
Am I in a different country?
HA! Someone really didn't listen to his school-feeding!
No, wait...
The shirt...
You said something about...
Swish
..."expressing your blood color."
I thought perhaps the horns were just a coincidence, but...
Do you have a lusus?


?!
You can't just ask someone whether they have a lusus!
Esp-

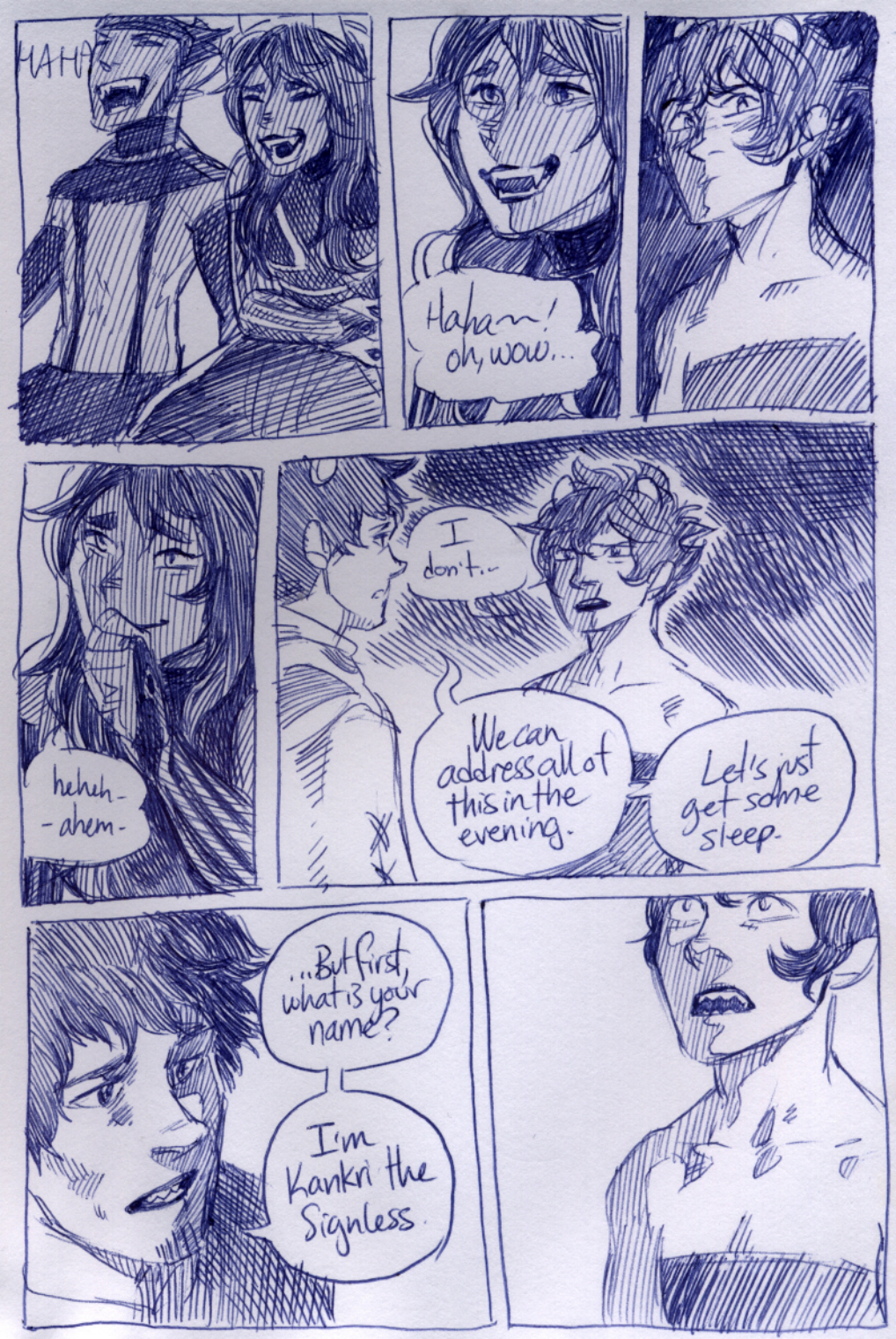

So?
We're the same, aren't we?
...Well, no need to answer.
That explains the lack of school feeding...
Excuse me, but-
Coming in!


It's broad daylight out there!
Why aren't you all asleep yet?
Welcome back!
We have a guest!

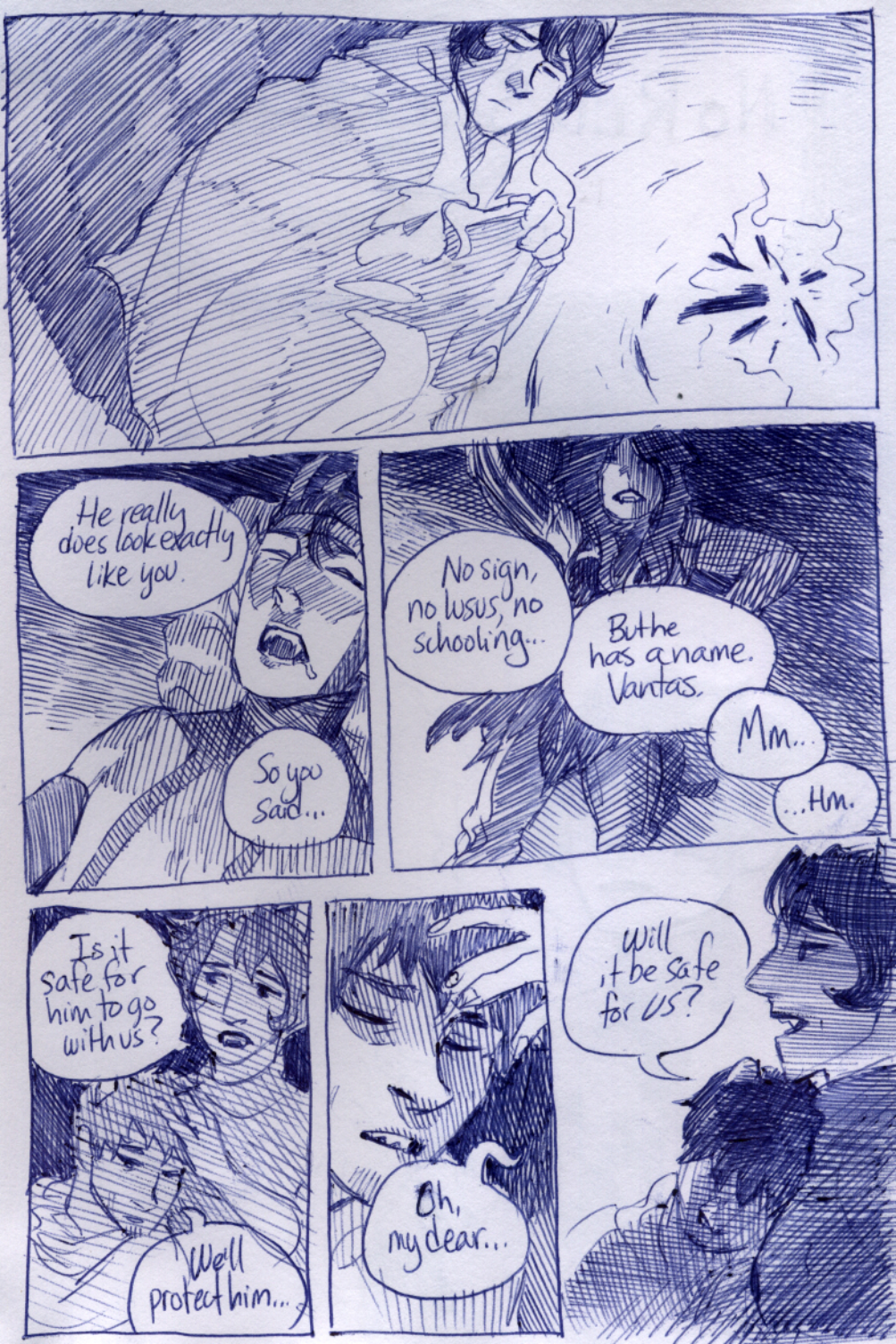

A guest? What-
Sweet allmother!
ah. Careful.
ZAP ZAP
What's the problem?
I... he...


He looks just like Kankri!
How-
He does not!
I mean, the horns, yes.
But the hair?
eheheh.
-oof-
Trust me, my dear, I know!
But when you were about his age you also had curly hair!
It just gets coarser with age.


I'll take your word for it, but look...
He's another mutant and we don't know how he survived
What
t somehow
e escaped
But-
lling and
ve're pre
sure h
properly schod-fed because he doesn't know the name of the planet.
Poor thing.
Beforus!
Just because I don't know where "Alternia" is doesn't mean I don't know we live on Beforus.
And I resent the implication that off-spectrum hives necessarily
AHAHAHAHA
HAHAHAH
HAHAHA

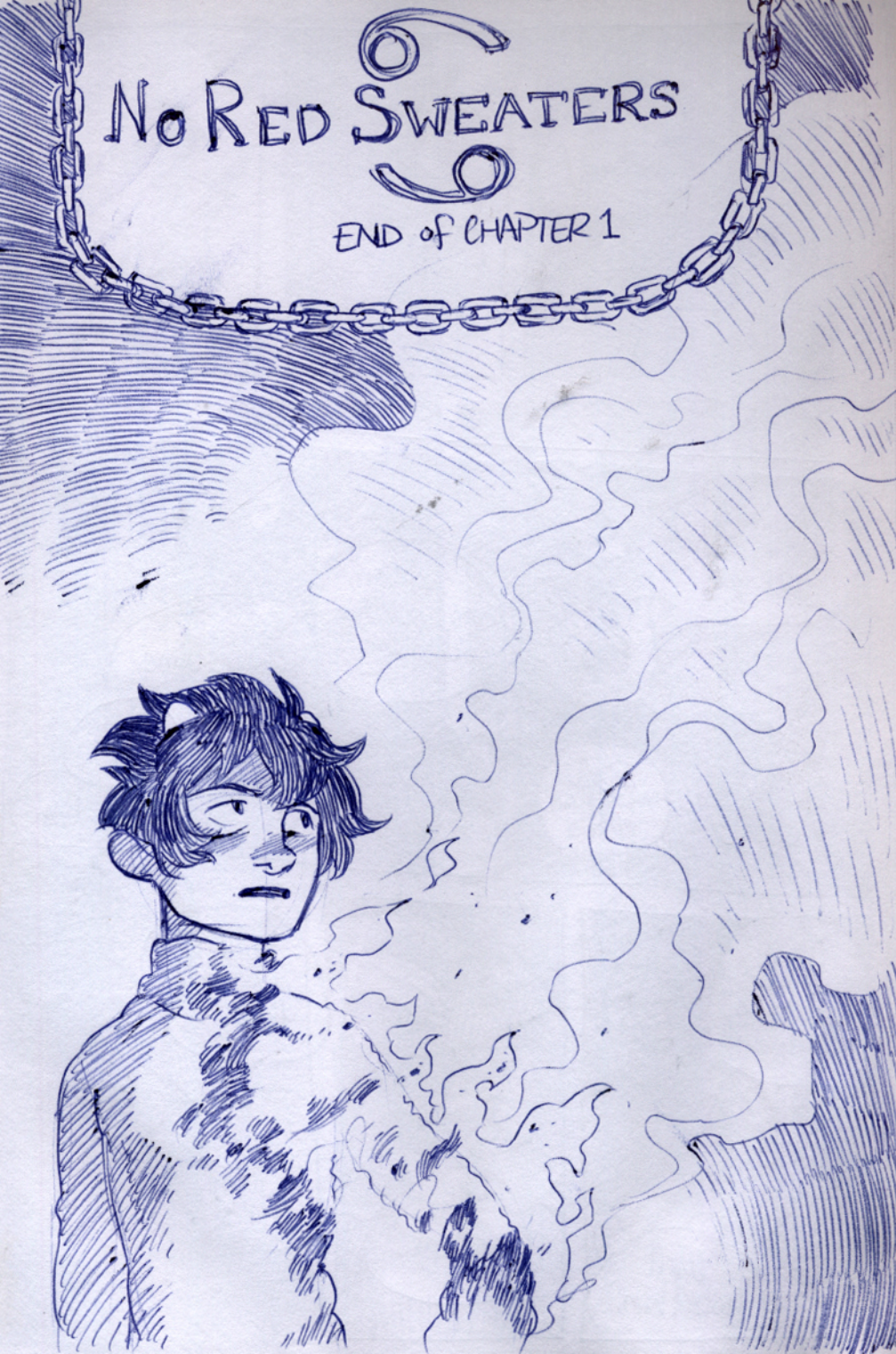

HAHA
Haha~! oh, wow...
hehehe- -ahem-
I don't..
We can address all of this in the evening.
Let's just get some sleep.
...But first, what is your name?
I'm Kankri the Signless.


...
Vantas.
Just Vantas?
No hatchname either.
More and more alike...


He really does look exactly like you.
So you said...
No sign, no lusus, no schooling...
But he has a name. Vantas.
Mm...
...Hm.
Is it safe for him to go with us?
Well protect him...
Oh, my dear...
Will it be safe for us?

No Red Sweaters

END of CHAPTER 1



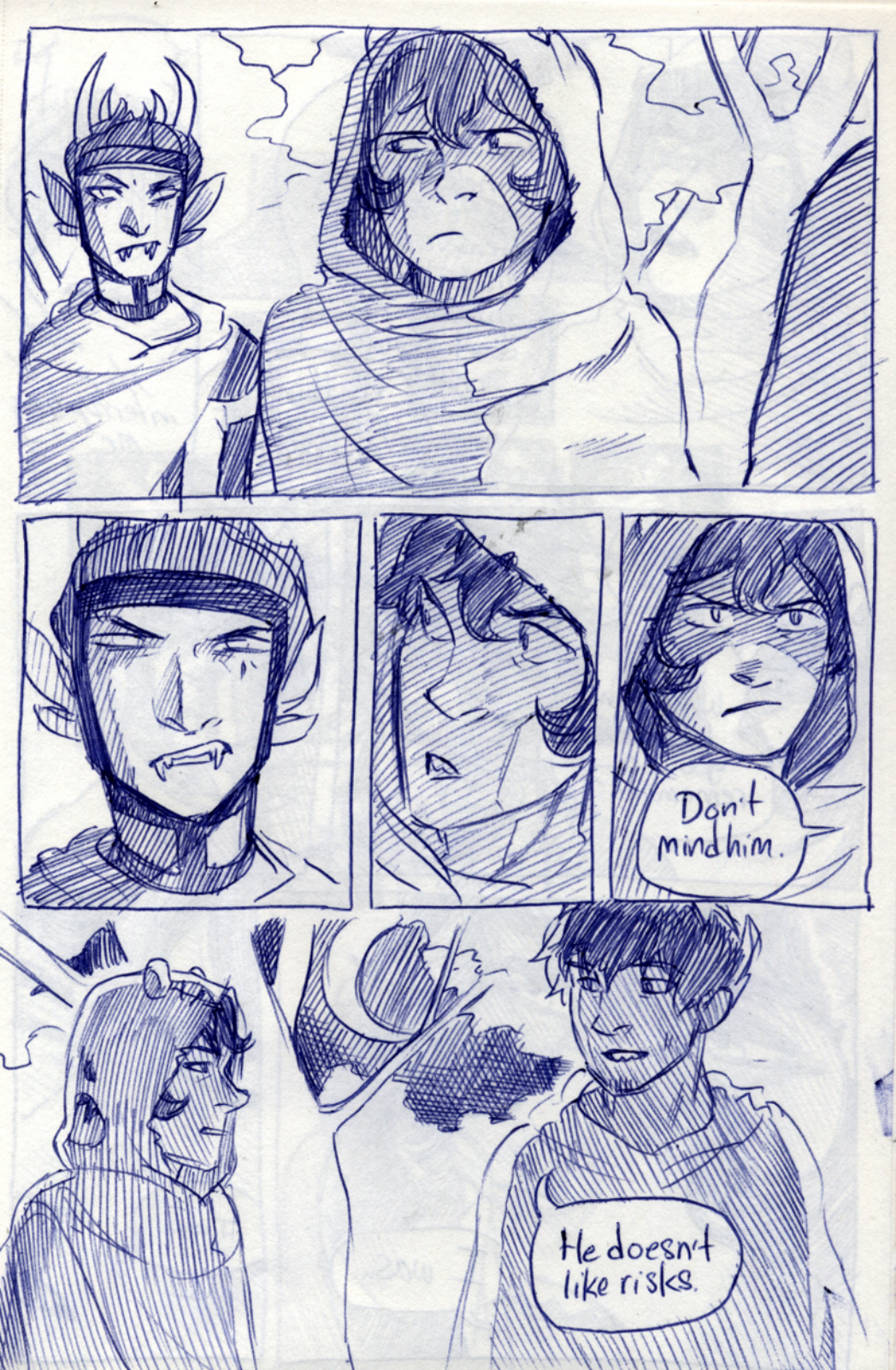

...and this is the homeworld, Alternia, where the Mother Grub is nested.
I was one of the jade matrons in the brooding caverns, but then...
She found me.
I found him!
...And now here we are.
Any questions?


I think we broke him.
My name is Borrim.
And I'm Meulin!
He's looked like that since we told him our names...
Mituna Captor.
Maybe we should wait for him—
I'm right here.
And as for your names—!


...I have nothing to say on the matter.
phew.
However...
Perfect.
He did this befor too.
You say you're traveling and spreading "the word of equality" under the nose of the "condesce"- stereotypically oppressive royalty who is in favor of hemo-based discrimination. But that's the only thing you're preaching against? Blood caste prejudice may be prevalent here
but are you addressing alternate quadrant preferences? Cooler-or-warmer-identifying caste members? I realize that due to the barbaric nature of this culture you may not be aware of such I think you benefit from variety of your "mutant" you should-
Because the system encouraging all those forms of oppression is held in place by hemo-based prejudice and privilege! Fuck!


You interrupted me!
I was making perfectly valid statements, which you disregarded, meaning...
...you're doing the same thing as the system you claim to abhor.
here we go
ha ha ha...
I was answering your questions.
I wasn't done!
This isn't a courtblock! I'm not taking fucking notes, child!
You learn that; no one is taking notes.
You want a dialogue, fine,
Kankri.
but you must make room for
Kankri.


It's already well past moon-rise.
We need to leave.
hhhh
I'll be more than willing to debate later if you'll think about what I said.
But we have to buy food now.
Do you want to come with us?
Kankri, no.
Excuse me?
Why not?
Because you're stupid!
You'd probably get us all killed!

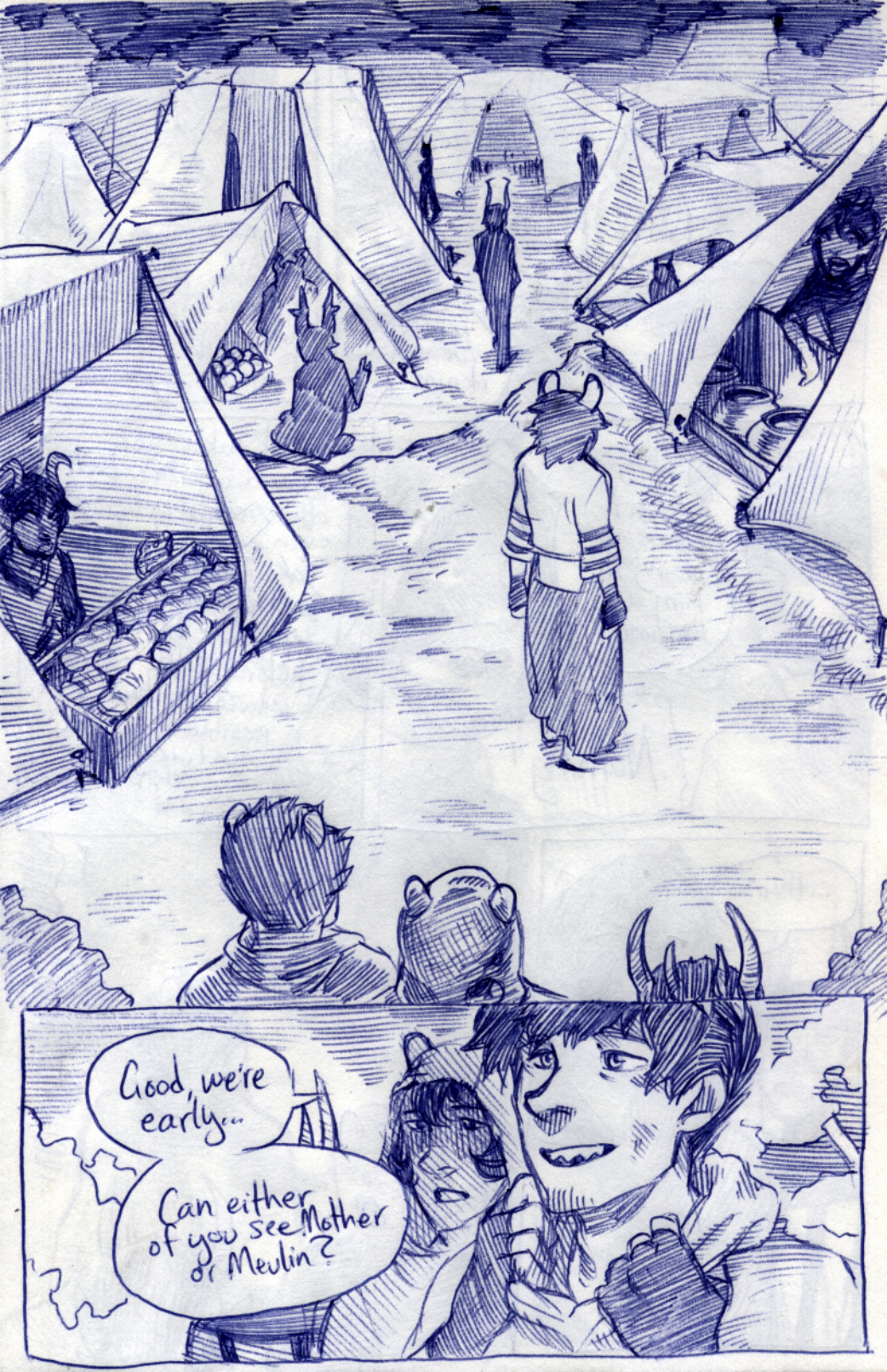

Don't mind him.
He doesn't like risks.


...I don't know what it is he's expecting me to do. His offensive opinions on my level of intelligence don't explain whath
He thinks you'll mouth off at a bad time.
stop interrupting me
Enough, though.
Look, what's the last thing you can remember?
I was...
I was...


I was going to play a game...


What kind of game?
I don't think you would know much about it.
It's quite new.
It's a kind of virtual reality premise, meant to be played co-operatively.
Okay.
My session was quite large- I intended to play with eleven of my friends.
Heh.
Kinky.


Hey.
The joke wasn't that bad.
Yes it was.
Also, a friend of mine used to use that word...
...a lot...
Oh yeah? What were you doing to him at the time?
Nothing!
And making such forward inquiries about others' sexual activities, even as a quote-unquote "joke" can be very harmful and triggering depending on the history of the individual, their possible a- quadrapted preferences and-
...their...


Good, we're early...
Can either of you see Mother or Merlin?


Why did they go ahead without us?
ah.
There have been more highblood patrols recently, so they're off scouting.
It's safer for them.
Why?
Why do you think?
Found 'em!
There you are!


Well?
There were a few purples about earlier, but they're gone now. I think it's safe.
Thank you.
If it's that dangerous, couldn't they come on their own?
?!
I think you're confused, grubling!
Please do not call me that.


We're not just here to buy food.
No, Kankri's here to argue.
Don't make me start now.
But I'm not, so Vantas, you stay with me.
ching-
Five caegars a loaf!
I thought three was normal...


I jvst an' do what the searabacus tells me.
Nothing to do with the fact that I don't live here?
Straight-out grobfuck haggling aint with change the price.
Now get leave out, jade.
You're a green-blood, though.
Look, just hear me out.
I won't take long.
...Step out, ass-hole.

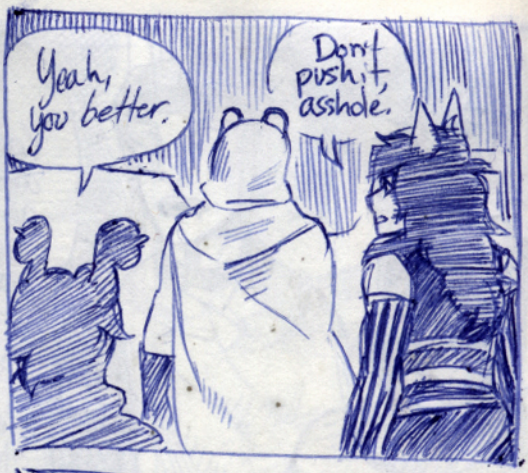

You two are only a hue apart- Jade and green.
Highbloods only stay on top because we do half their job for them.
Even in everyday affairs!
So I ought grubloaf for less sell? That gonna fix it?
No look, fuck the grub- loaf.
It doesn't matter this time, but what I'm saying is, someone has to start acting decent before everyone else will.
This is it?
Got a problem with it?
...It just doesn't seem especially convincing to me.
Fat chance.
No, I don't believe that!
We're capable of good!


Wanna explain that?
He's not really explaining-
I was just going to say, it works.
Not on everyone, of course, cuz he's so fucking idealistic, but...
He managed to convince me, so I think we might really have a chance.
He never told that merchant exactly why his behavior was offensive!
But-
And-
...
Go on then. I'll just... try to remember what I was going to say.


Okay, but he could still put more effort into informing them about which specific behaviors constitute homophobic micro-aggressions...
...and for that matter, other types of prejudiced language which they may or may not [illegible] offensive, such as ag[illegible] words like "rails wit[illegible] similar derogat[illegible] terms or relat[illegible] lines be[illegible] which [illegible] hotky exis[illegible]
...which is some-thing the un-educated seem to discount when dis-cussing romantic preference.
How did it go?
He gave us an extra half a loaf!


Meulin's the same caste as most of the locals, so she's out softening them up. (In theory.)
We're just going to find her, so stay close!
You, can at least agree blood is a stupid way to gauge worth!
Now you're just being intentionally obtuse!
You're the problem! It's you!
Okay, calm down
SAY WHAT
FUCK OFF, A-BLOOD
Now you see the problem here!

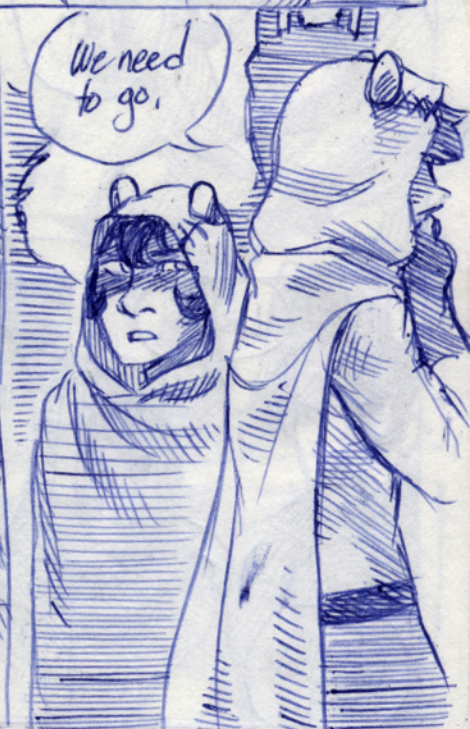

So just... think about that, can't you?
Fuck.

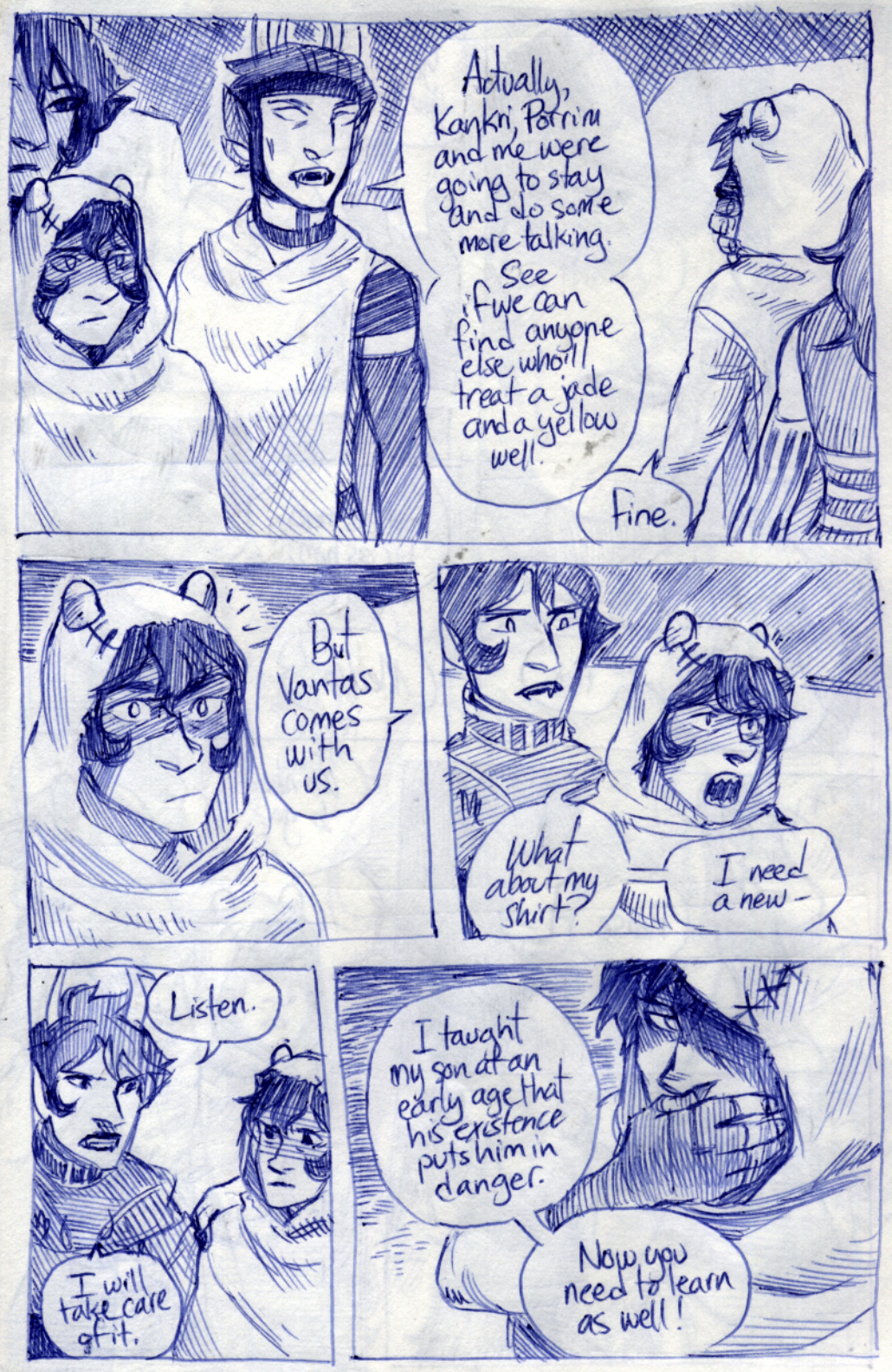

Yeah, you better.
Don't push it, asshole.

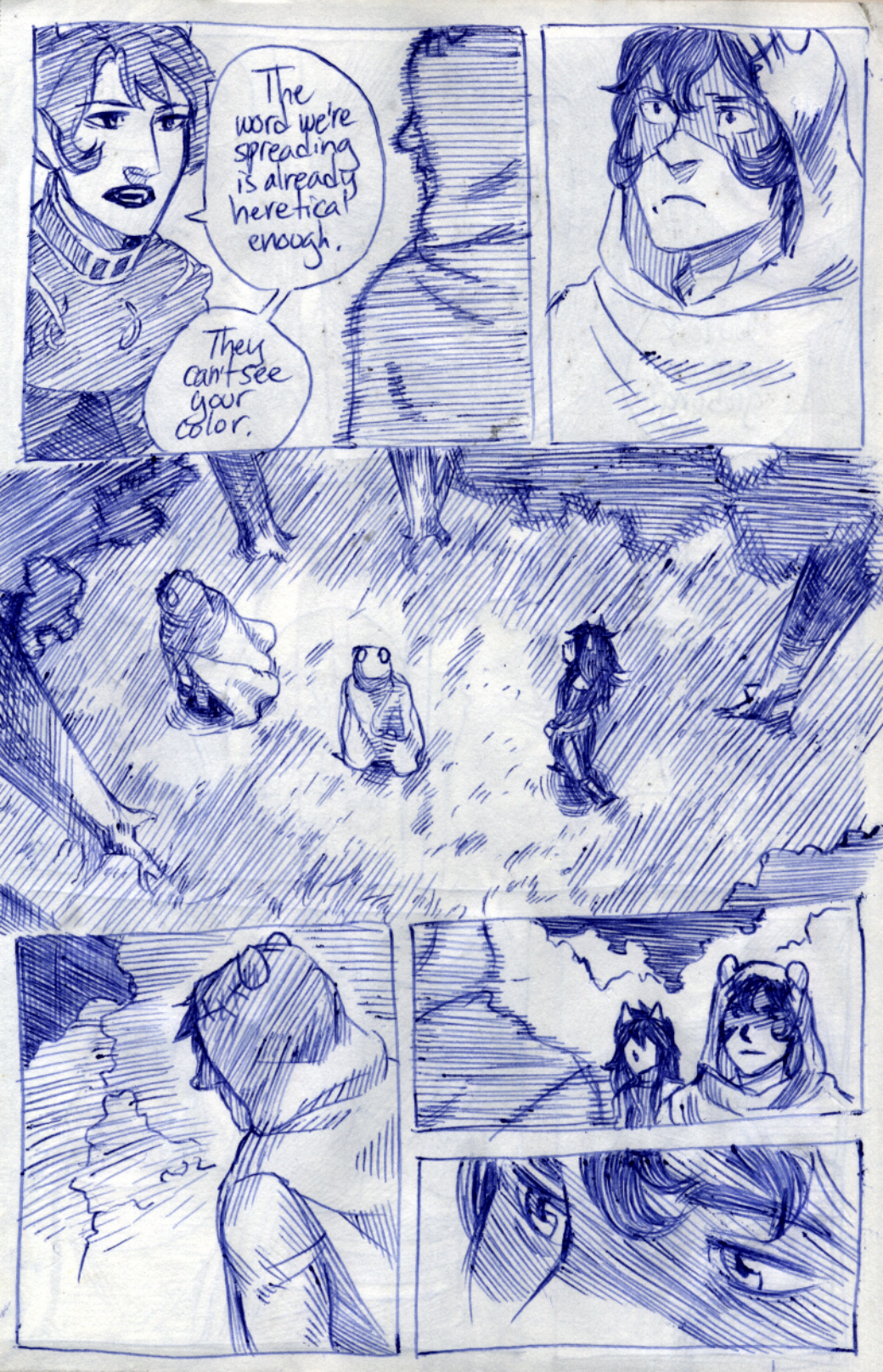

I'm not as merci-ful as him.
Merlin!

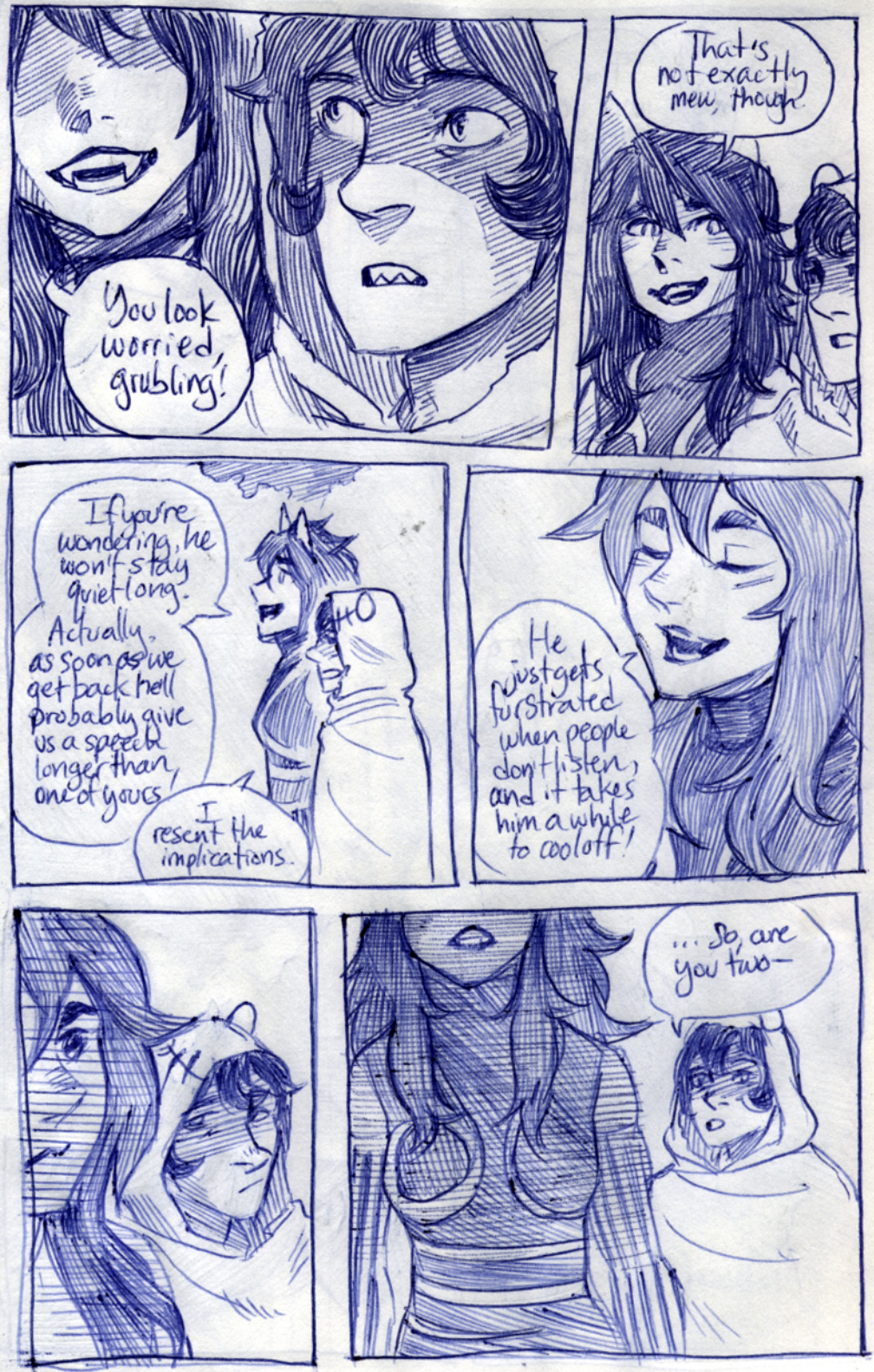

Please.




We need to go.

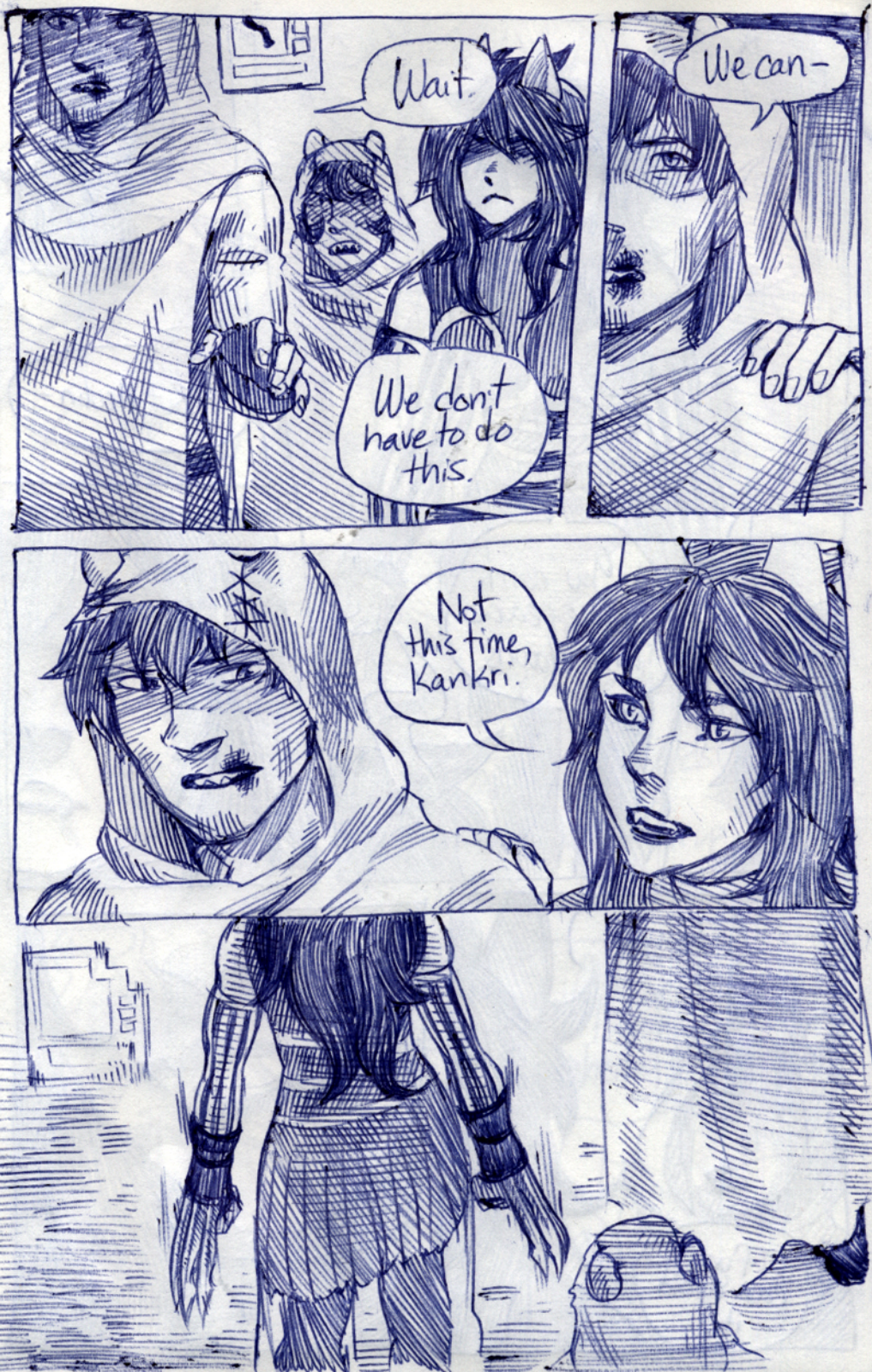

Actually, Kankri, Porrim and me were going to stay and do some more talking.
See if we can find anyone else who'll treat a jade and a yellow well.
Fine.
But Vantas comes with us.
What about my shirt?
I need a new -
Listen.
I will take care of it.
I taught my son at an early age that his existence puts him in danger.
Now you need to learn as well!


The word we're spreading is already heretical enough.
They can't see your color.

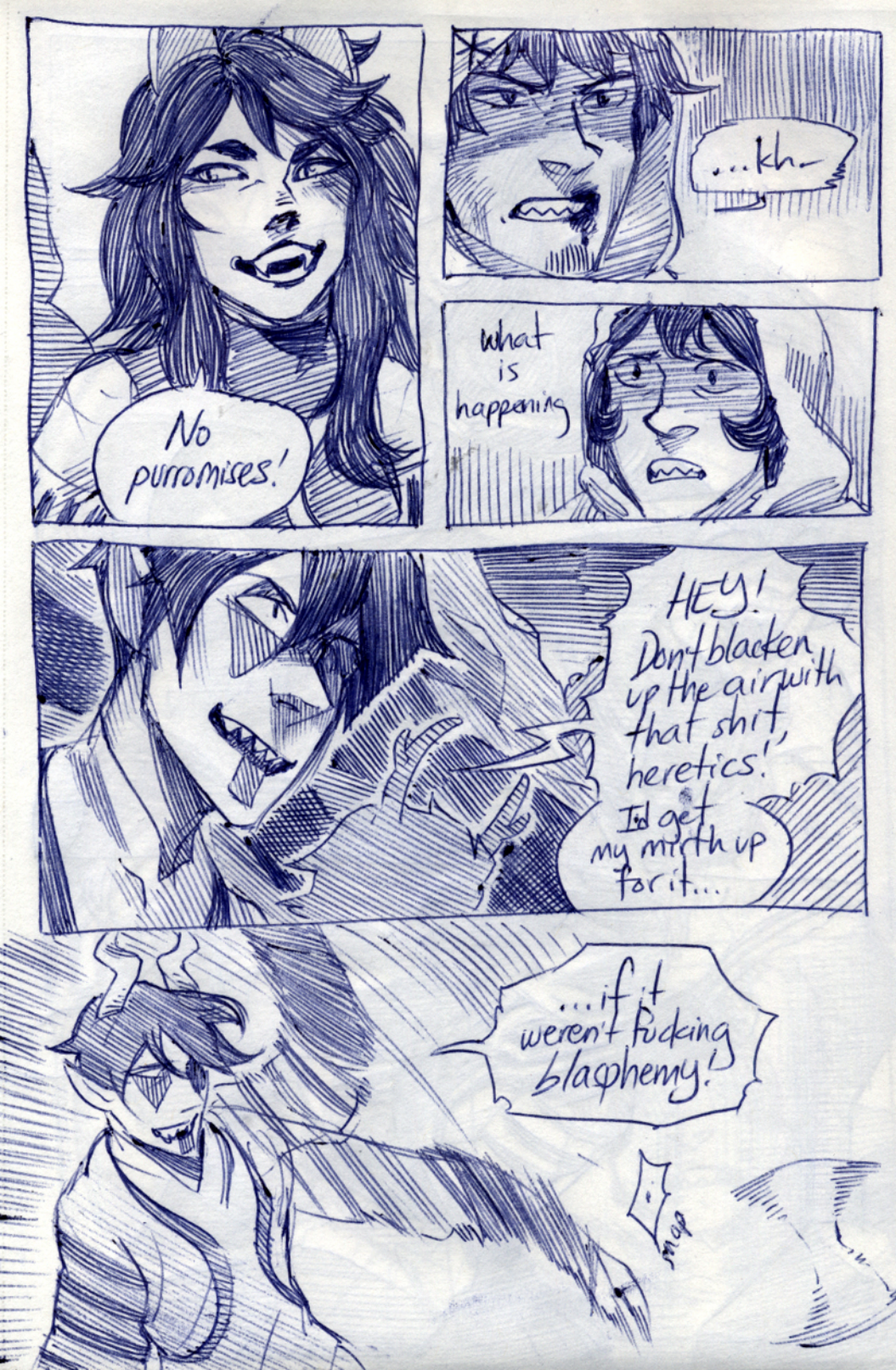

You look worried, grubling!
That's not exactly new, though.
If you're wondering, he won't stay quiet long. Actually, as soon as we get back he'll probably give us a speech longer than one of yours.
I resent the implications.
He just gets frustrated when people don't listen, and it takes him a while to cool off!
... So, are you two—

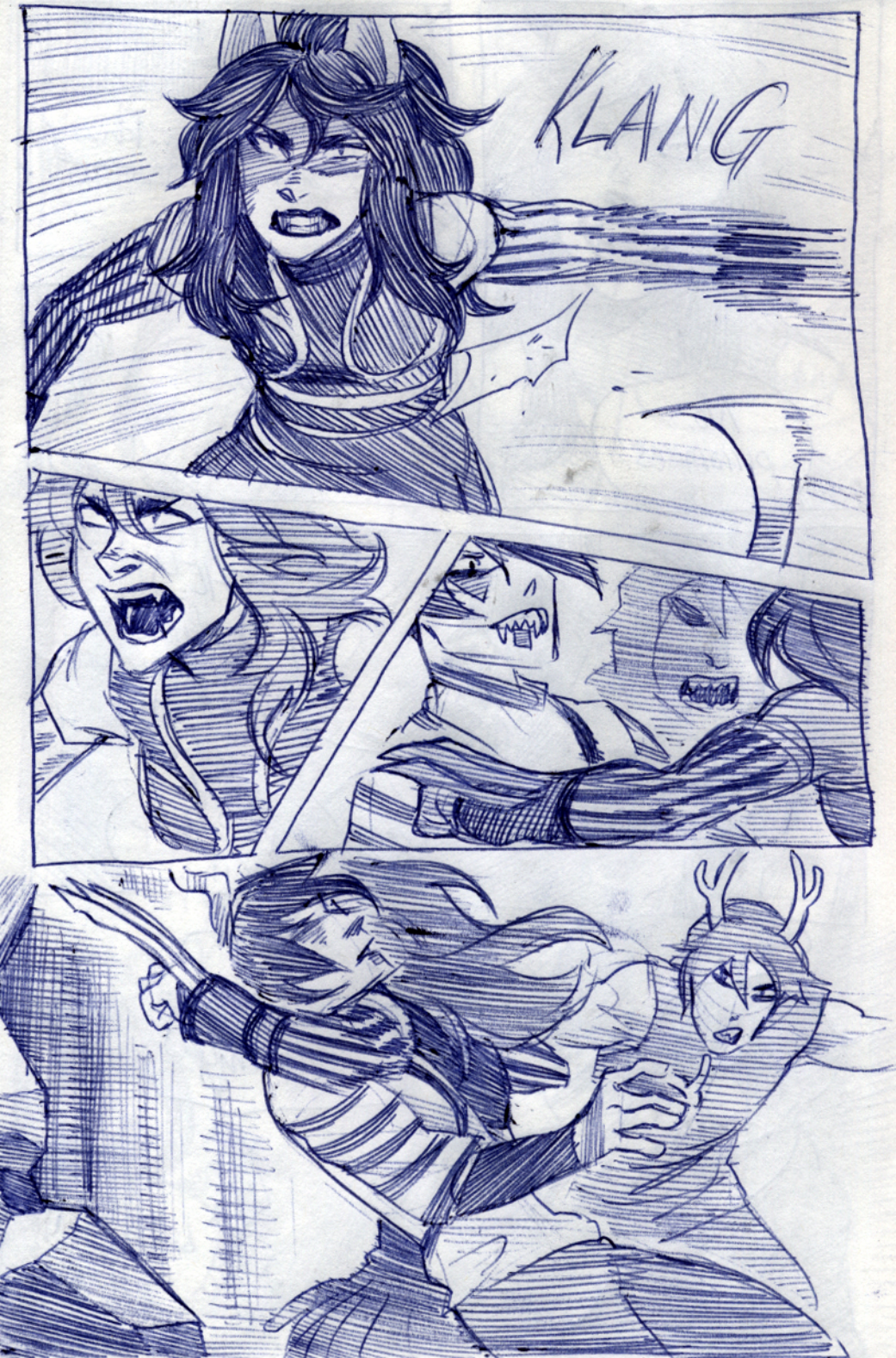


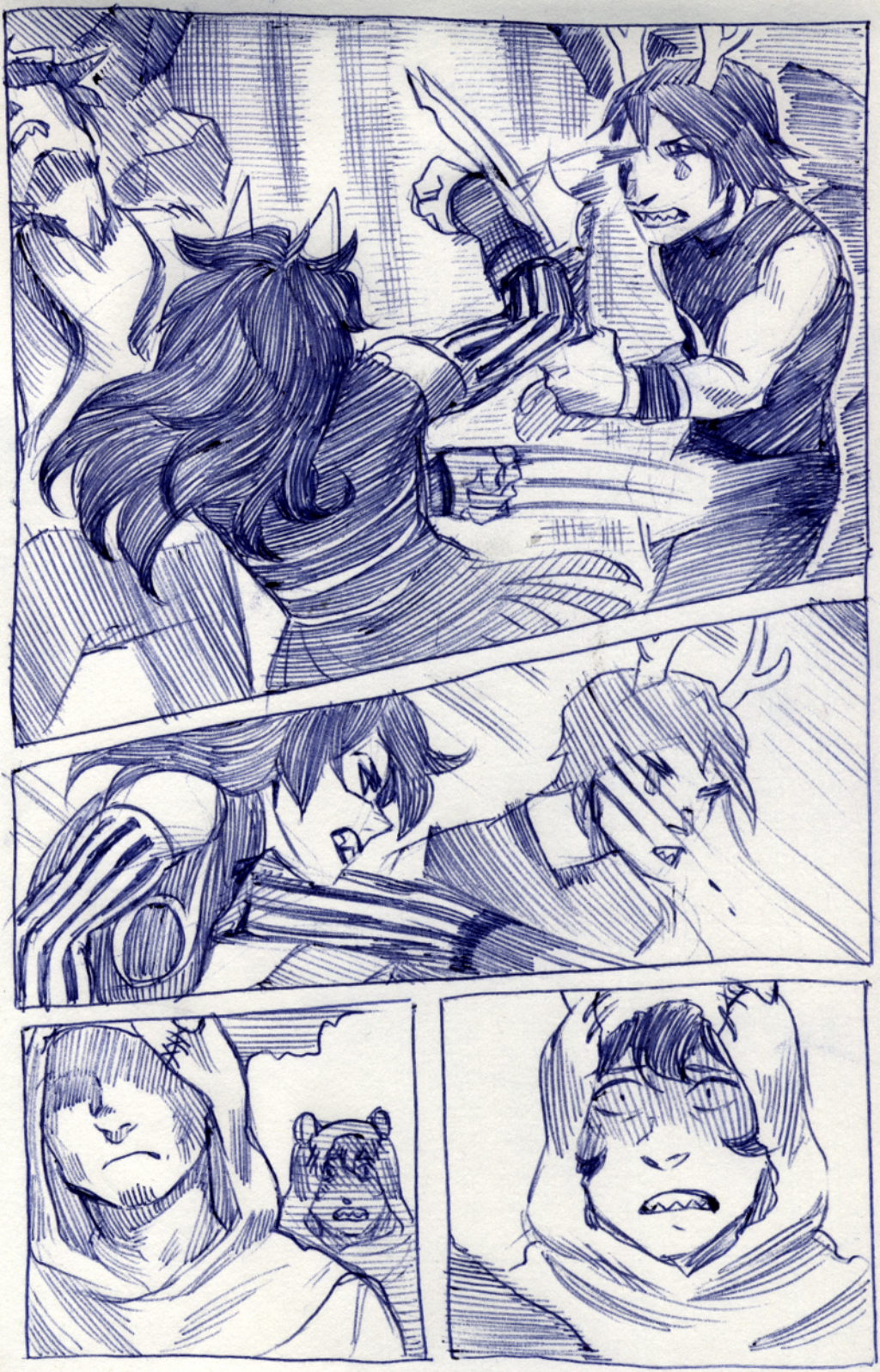

Looks like the tip was good.
You the ones lightin' fires back here...
...Mutant?
Let's paint.
Church.

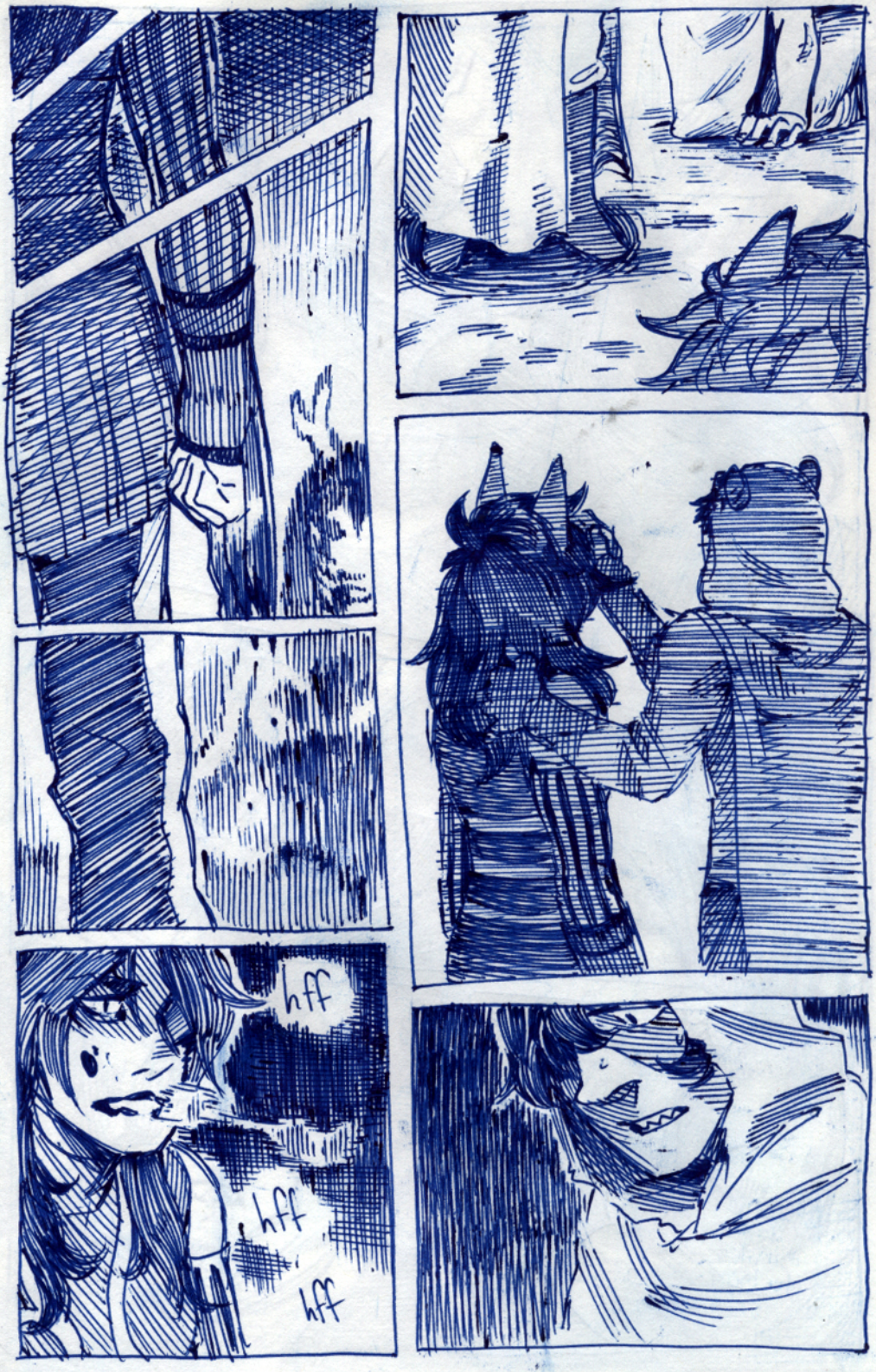

Wait.
We don't have to do this.
We can-
Not this time, Kankri.


You can't make peace with clowns.
-But Merlin-
If you...
If you can avoid it...

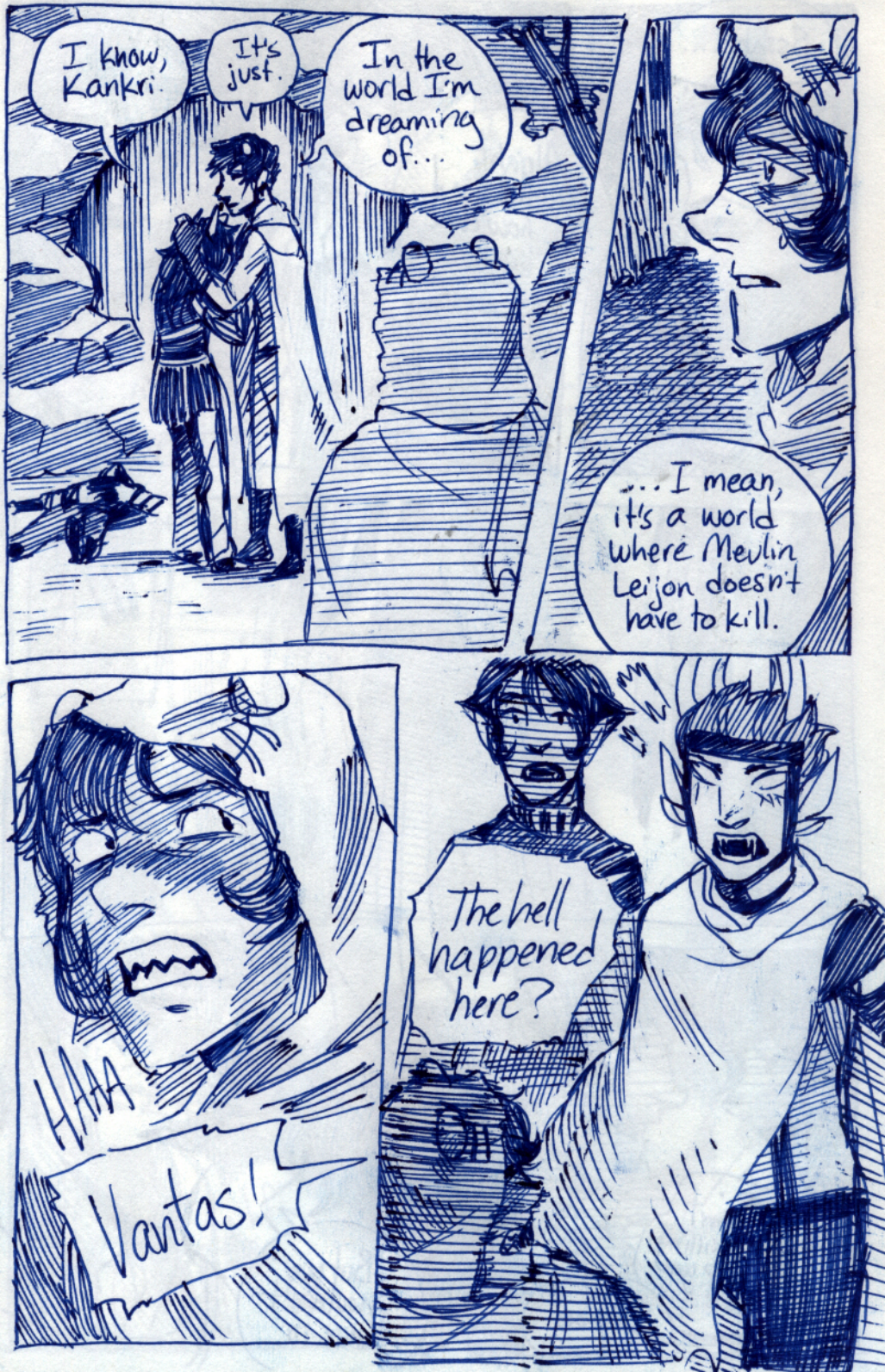

No purromises!
...kh-
what is happening
HEY! Don't blacken up the air with that shit, heretics! I'd get my mouth up for it...
...if it weren't fucking blasphemy!


KLANG




hff
hff
hff


Ssshhh...
Alright, you finished it, now come back.
Put the claws away, Merlin...
I don't mind killing to keep you safe.
I know.
But you shouldn't have to.


I know, Kankri.
It's just.
In the world I'm dreaming of...
...I mean, it's a world where Meulin Leijon doesn't have to kill.
HAAA
Vantas!
The hell happened here?

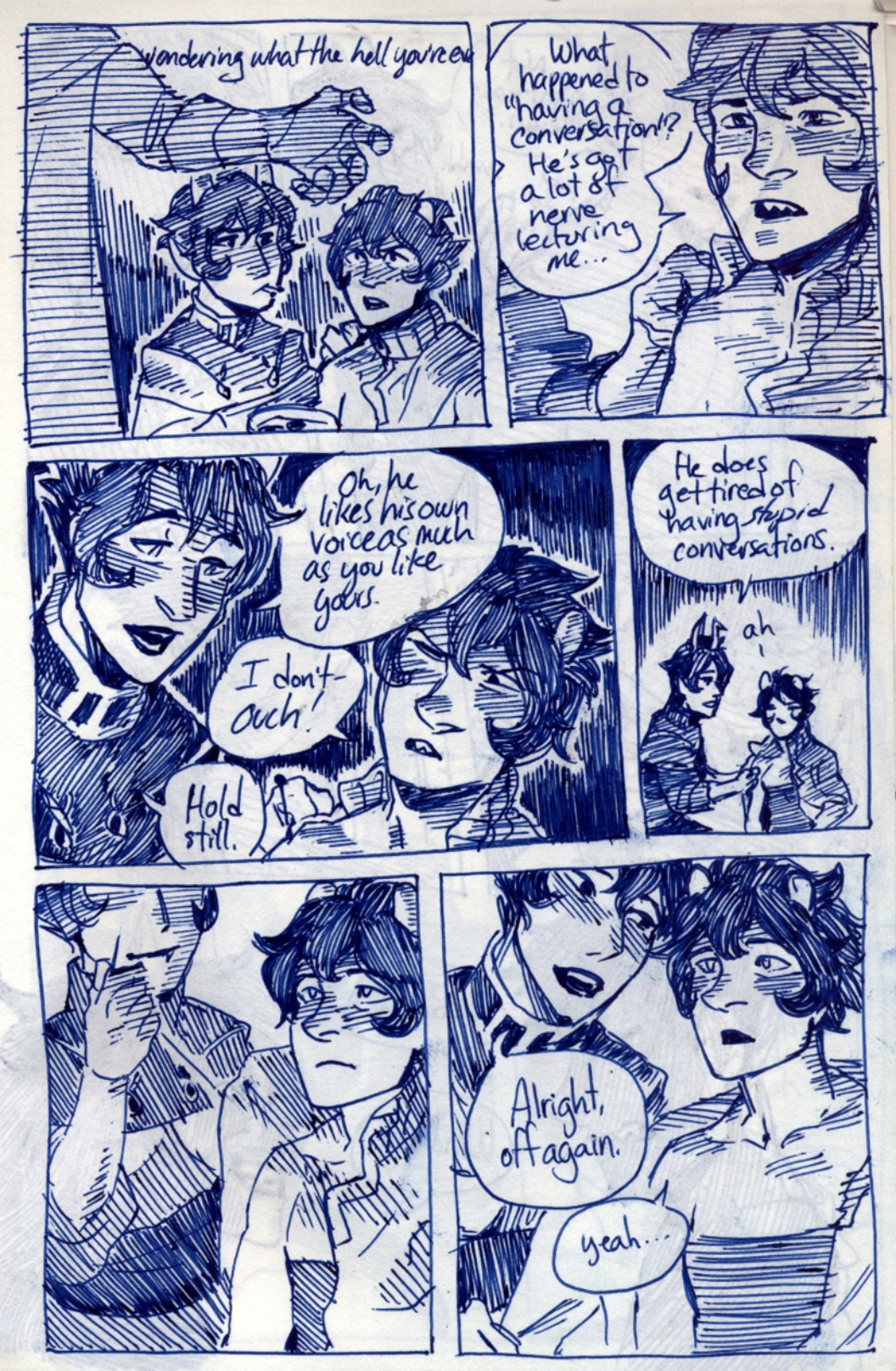

-they-
-she-
We need to move out.
I see that, Kankri!
You okay, bro?
Can you walk?
shake shake shake
Ill carry you when we start moving, then.
Hope you don't mind psi.
hhhh-
Alright.

NO RED SWEATERS

End of CHAPTER 2




-absolutely ridiculous the way they just keep falling back on these phrases they know and they don't even think about it!
Like, "why is one blood color better than the other?" and they just stare-
-and say, "oh, well, it's a shade closer to the Empress" and I'll say "yes, but WHY DOES THAT MAKE IT BETTER?"
..."well, it's a shade closer to the empress."
"well I'm not even on the spectrum. so where does that put me?"
"AHA see, that's why you don't understand! You should've been culled, rocksponge, how are you even still alive?!"
And then they go and quadrant anyone they please because of "serendipity" and they don't see it as hypocrisy! If we can afford equality in our soulmates, can't we have some in our society?
No! No, apparently we can't. So instead they just keep pushing everyone even a shade "below" them down the ranged elevation stack! So even if the empress couldn't kill us all, we got ourselves oppressed! We're good!


wondering what the hell you're ev
What happened to "having a conversation"? He's got a lot of nerve lecturing me...
Oh, he likes his own voice as much as you like yours.
I don't- ouch!
Hold still.
He does get tired of having stupid conversations.
ah
Alright, off again.
yeah...

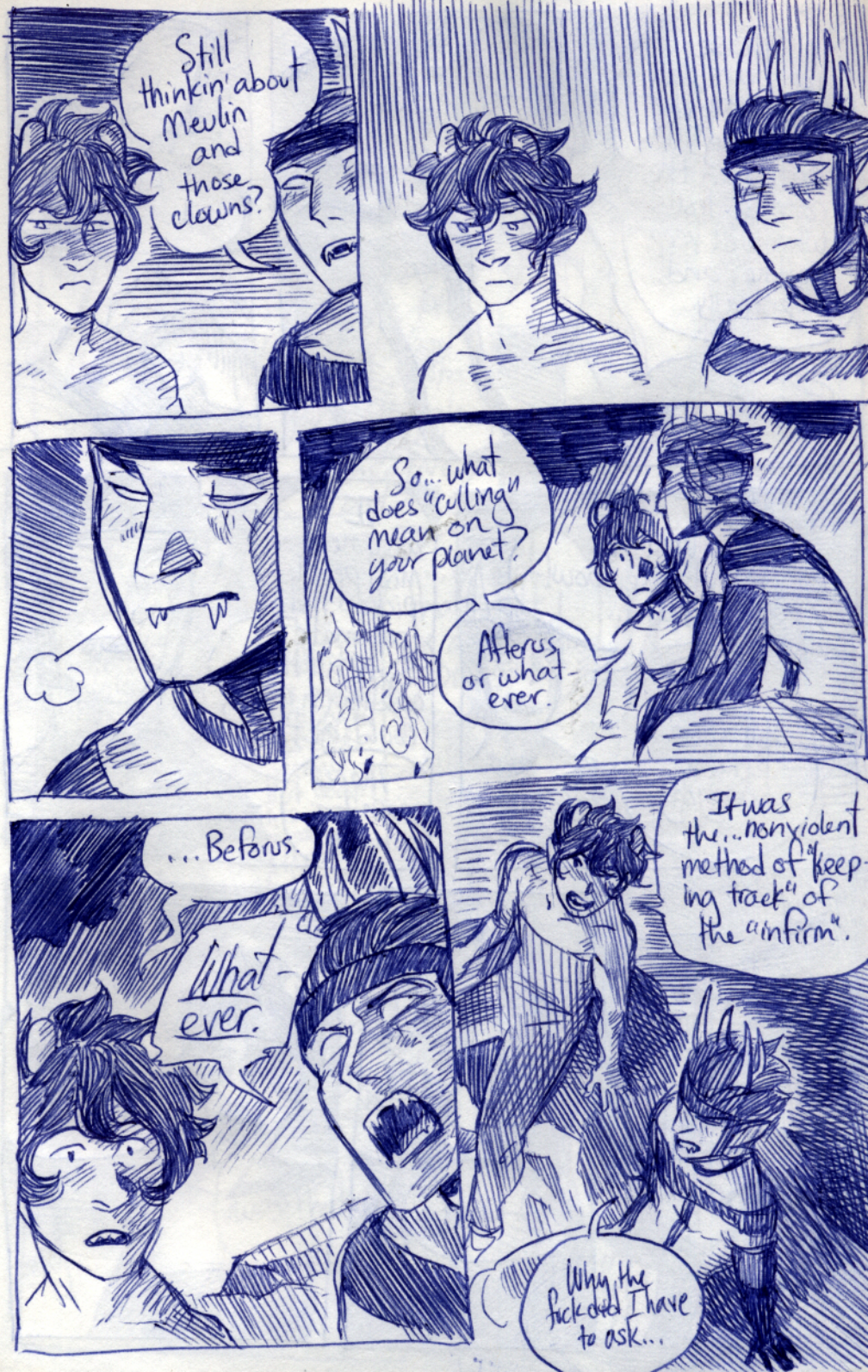

...Not right now, Merlin.
pap pap
sssshhh
Merlin.
there there
Goddammit!
Can't you just—
PAP
...Bitch.
Windbag.


I- you-
You were recording my every word a minute ago!
Oh, should I still be doing that? "Book of the Signless, Chapter Fifteen, Verse Ten: BITCH." I'll write it in red so they know it's you!
Like you even have red to write in!
Oh, I can think of a few places to get some..
They get that look a lot.
-Huh-?

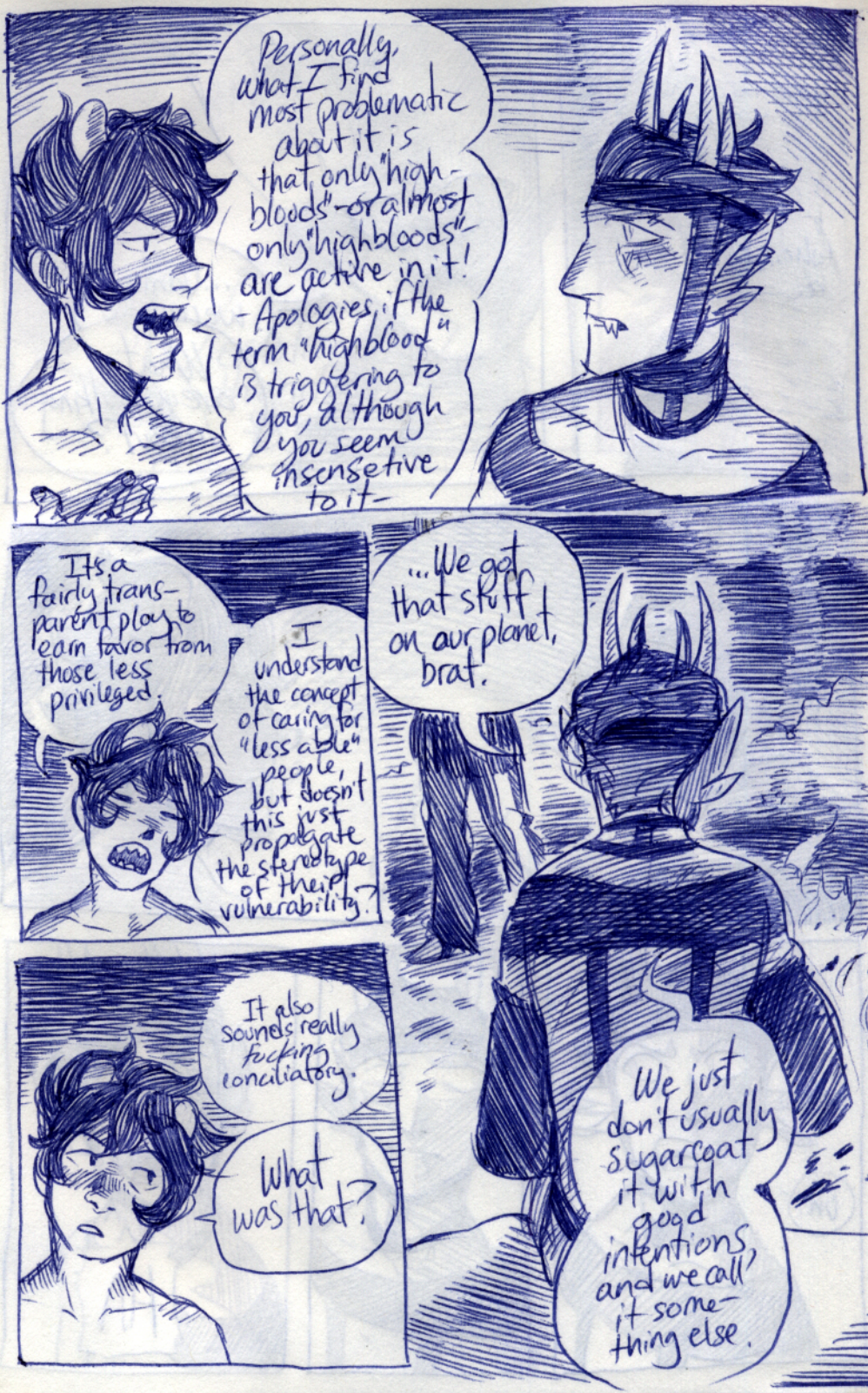

"Wait, I thought they were in that other quadrant!"
Right?
Well, I hesitate to pry, but...
I was wondering whether they're pan-quadranted or demi-pitch moirails or even vaccilating pitch-flushed non-concupiscent.
I'm not that under-educated.

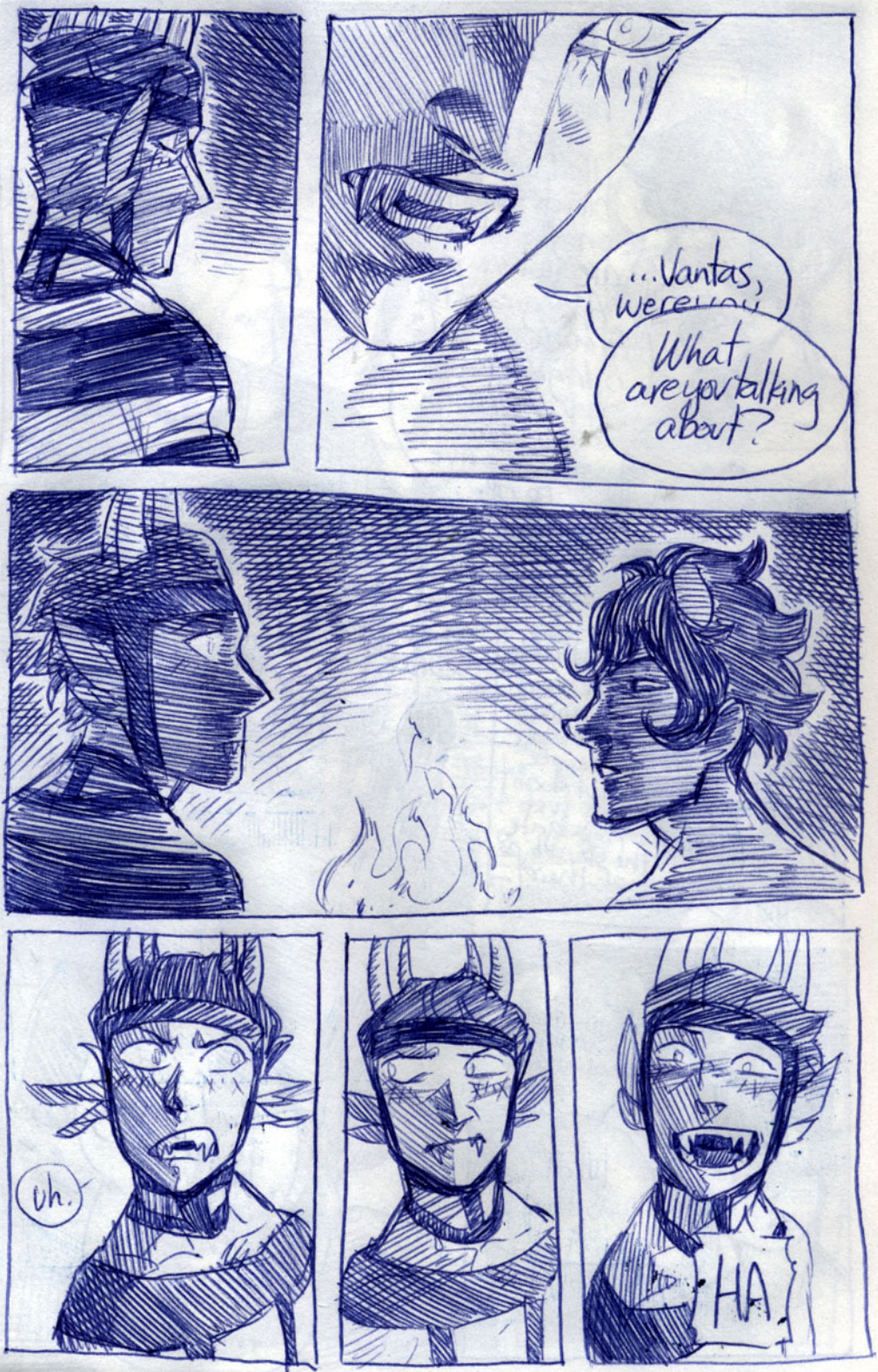

...Usually they just say "all of the quadrants."
Pan, then.
Sure.
...You know, that attitude could be considered extremely offensive by marginalized VQT (Variously Quadranted Trolls), especially-
...well, how much do you know about this stuff?
If there are other people like Kankri and Meulin, I sure as hell haven't met 'em.
Well, they definitely exist.
Then they keep it quiet, and I wouldn't blame 'em. You'd get culled instantly for presenting one person for pitchpail and flush.


but why would...
Summary execution.
Usually by dismemberment.
...what does "culling" mean in this context?
shouldn't be surprised...
Hey!
SNAP
Why, does it mean something else on your weird-ass colony homeworld?
...yes.

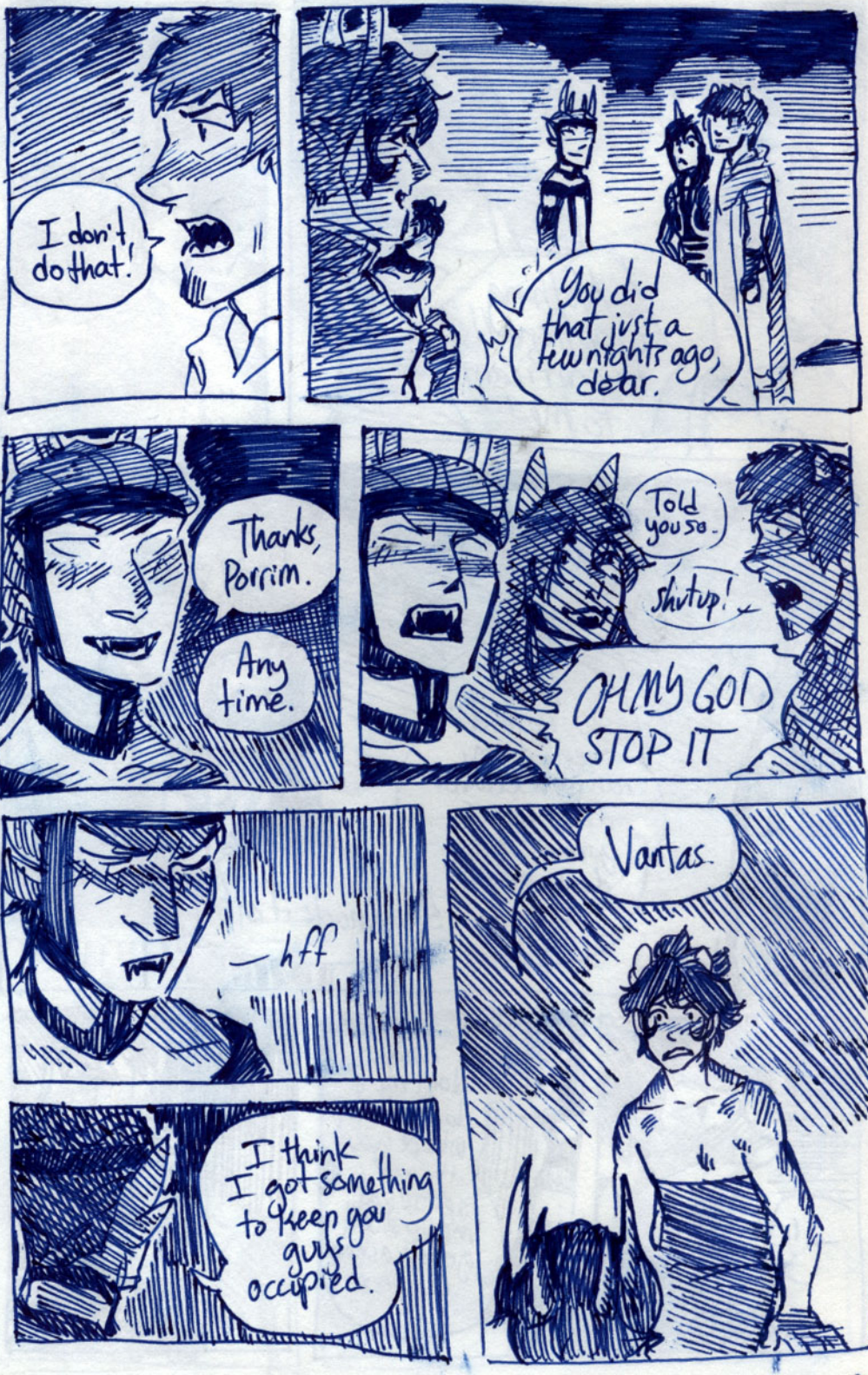

Still thinkin' about Merlin and those clowns?
So... what does "calling" mean on your planet?
Aferus, or what-ever.
...Beforus.
What-ever.
It was the... non-violent method of "keeping track" of the "infirm".
Why the fuck did I have to ask...

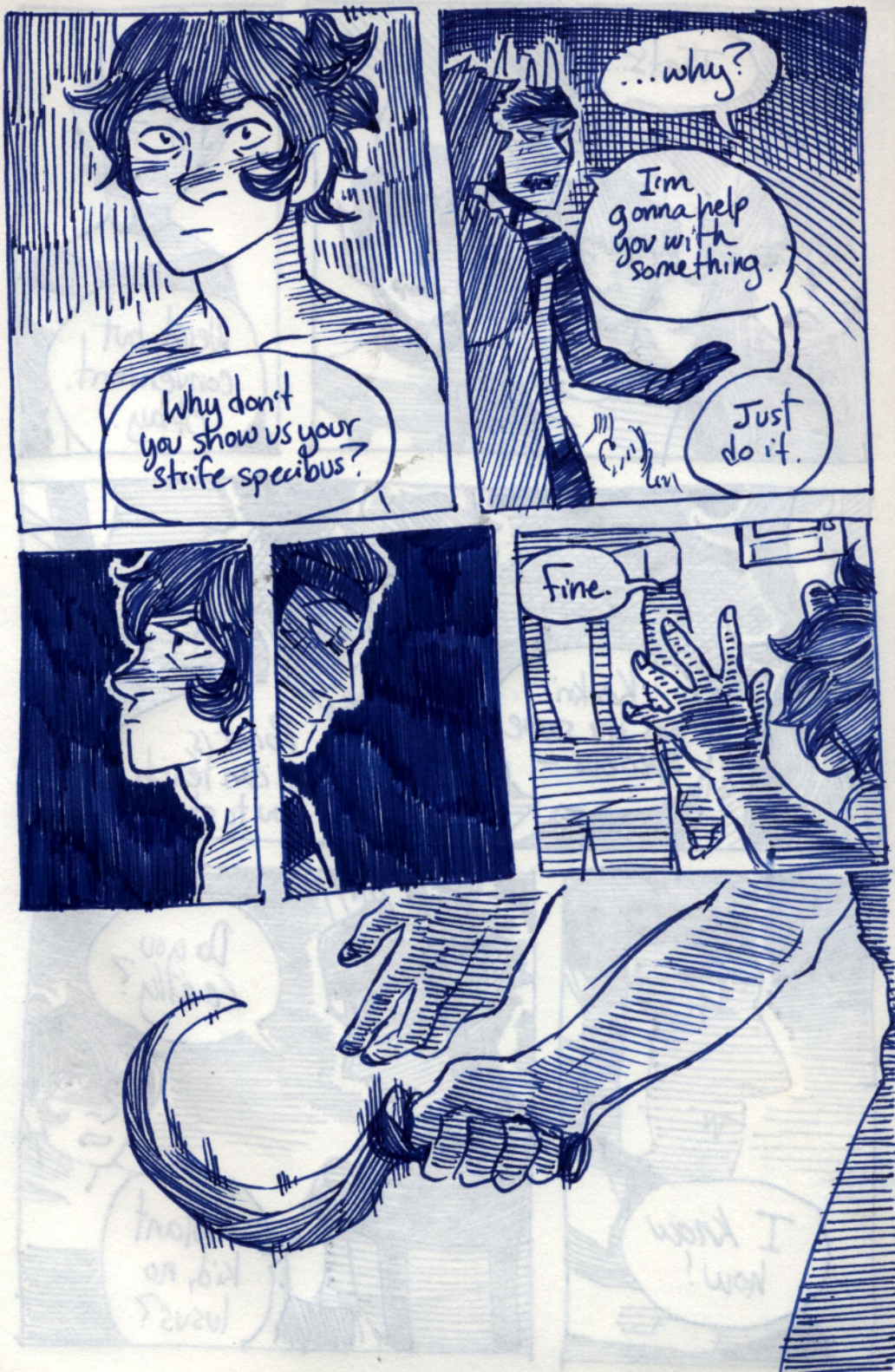

Those who are, say, physically or mentally "ill" are put in the care of trolls who will keep, coddle, and, generally...
...keep them out of trouble."
Well, it's not disembowlment...
But it still sounds fucking amazing.
I assume most people picked their palemate? Since all that coddling 'n caring could get a
There wasn't a choice.
...what.
Well, some were too young to have quadrants filled anyway.


Personally, what I find most problematic about it is that only "highbloods" - or almost only "highbloods" - are active in it!
- Apologies, if the term "highblood" is triggering to you, although you seem insensetive to it -
Its a fairly transparent play to earn favor from those less privileged.
I understand the concept of caring for "less able" people, but doesn't this just propagate the stereotype of their vulnerability?
...We got that stuff on our planet, brat.
It also sounds really fucking conciliatory.
What was that?
We just don't usually sugarcoat it with good intentions and we call it something else.

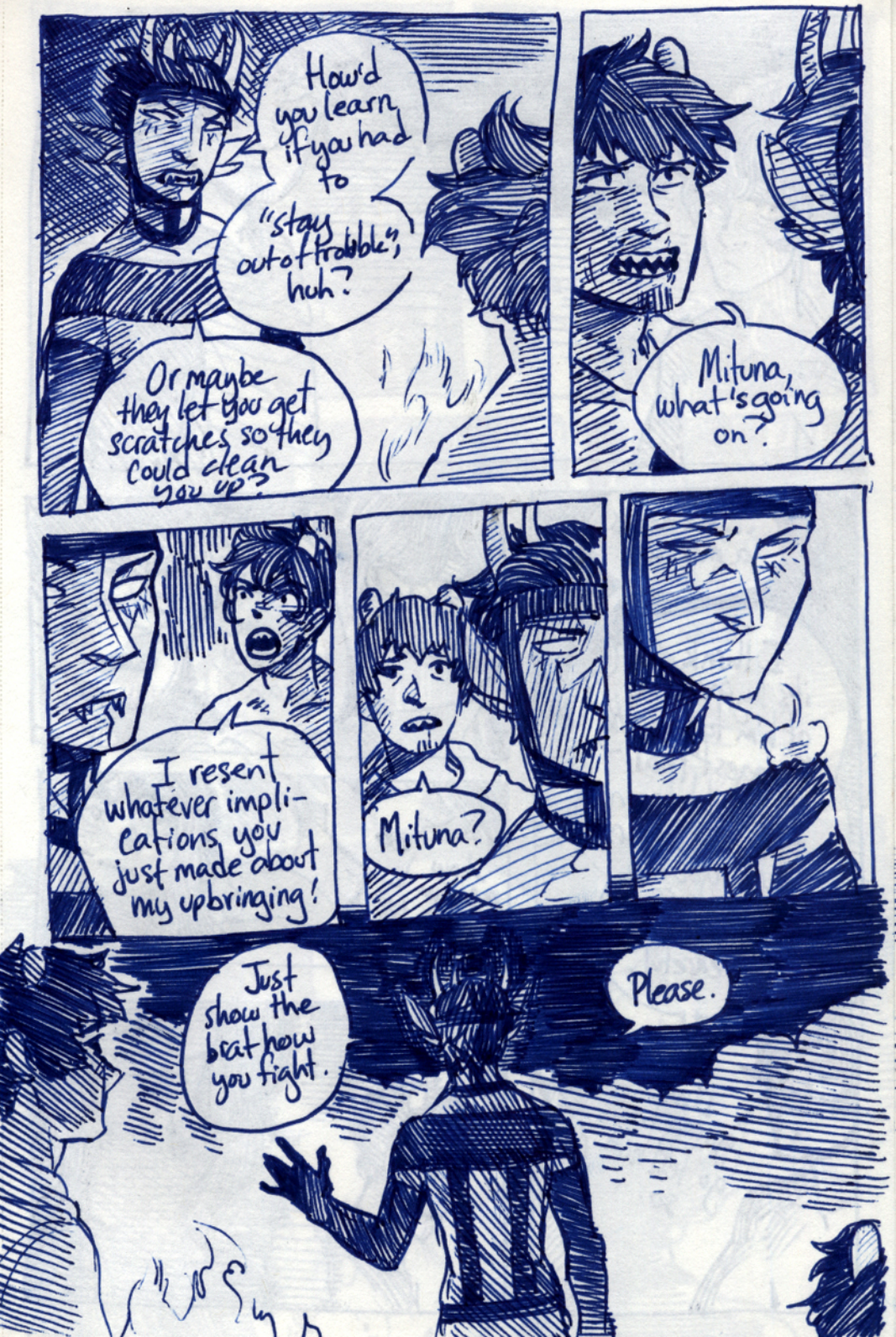

...Vantas, were you
What are you talking about?
Uh.
HA


What
Nothing emotionally thignificant to me!
aaaaaaaahh what is happening
You two!
Keep this up and every damn rangerviscerator in the area is gonna come down on our craniums.
Knock it off.
—!
And don't dare do the thing where you throw spades at me so she'll get all ashen between us.


I don't do that!
You did that just a few nights ago, dear.
Thanks, Porrim.
Any time.
Told you so.
Shut up!
OH MY GOD STOP IT
—hff
I think I got something to keep you guys occupied.
Vantas.


Why don't you show us your strife specibus?
...why?
I'm gonna help you with something.
Just do it.
Fine.

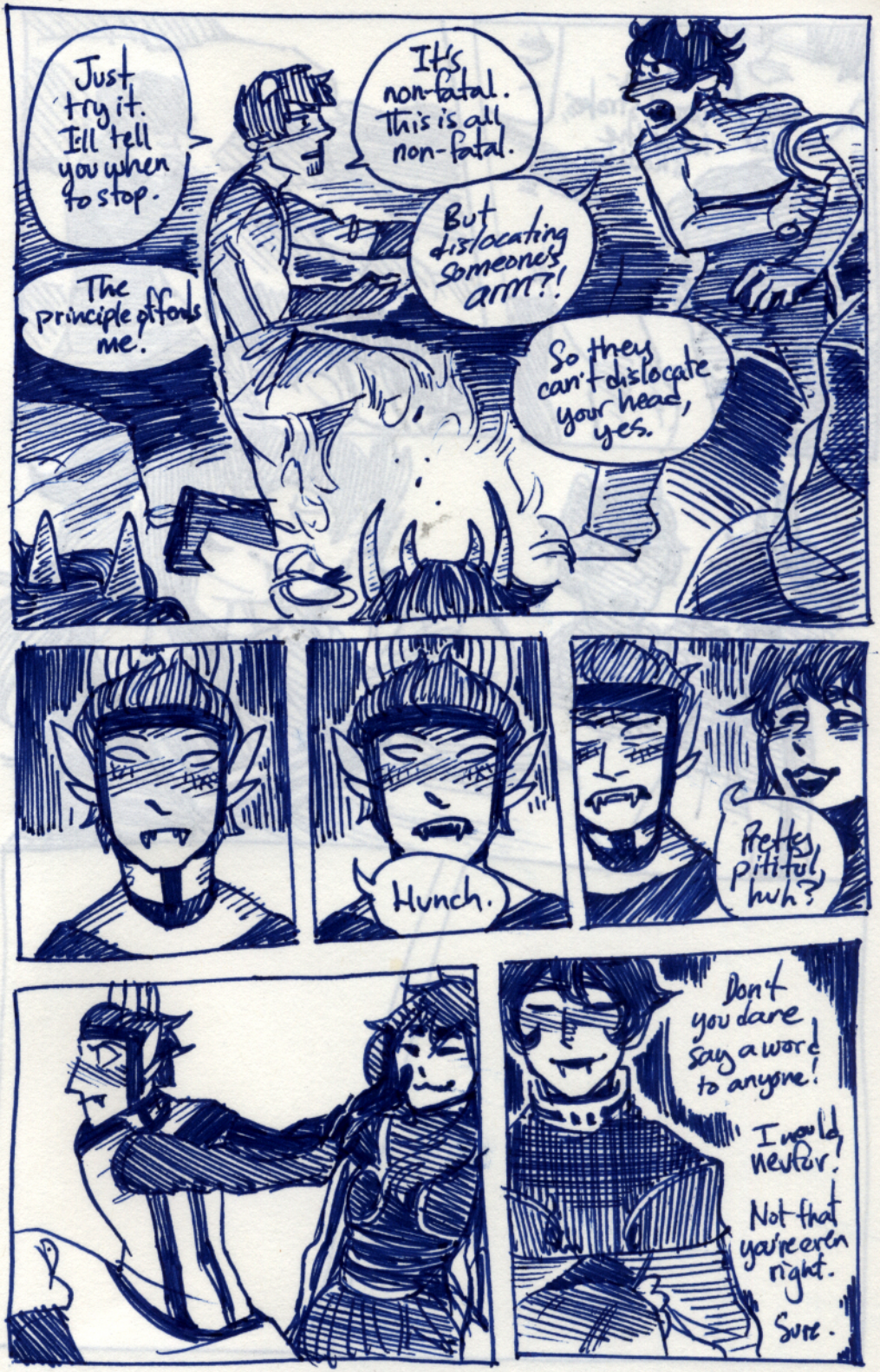

That's...
Weird, but convenient. Okay.
Kankri has the same specibus —
secondary specibus.
Point is, he can teach you to strife.
I know how!
Do you really?
Mutant kid, no lusus?


How'd you learn if you had to "stay out of trouble", huh?
Or maybe they let you get scratches so they could clean you up?
Mituna, what's going on?
I resent whatever implications you just made about my upbringing!
Mituna?
Just show the brat how you fight.
Please.


... He needs a moirai.
I think it's hypocritical of him to violently "suggest" that I should learn to harm others when your message is supposedly peaceful.
and I'm going to go tell him so.
Hey. Maybe not now, yeah?
Show me your basics.
Alright...


Don't say it.
...Im not trying to take care of him.

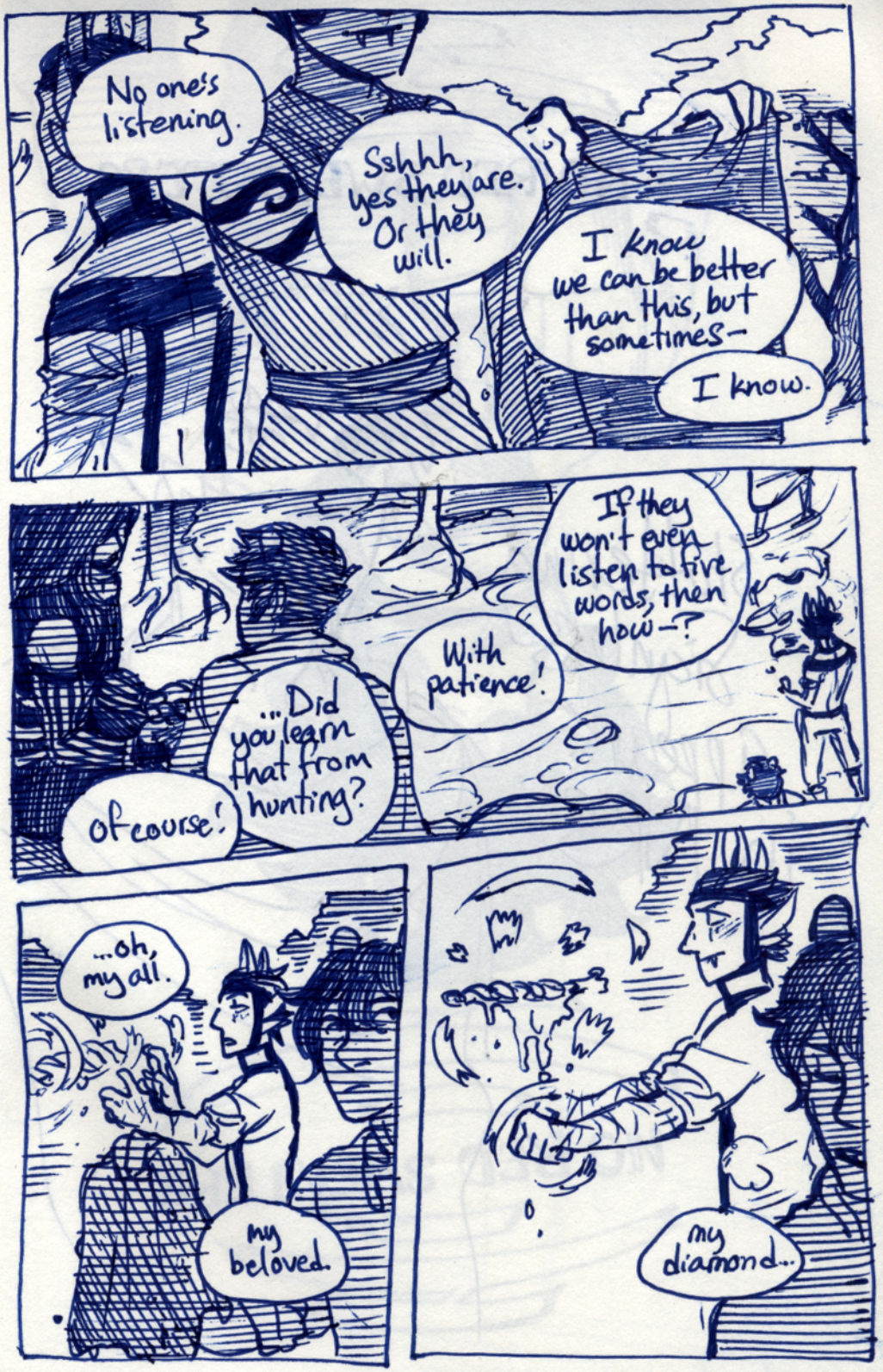

I think he should take care of himself. Seems like some other troll "looked after" him back home.
The way I looked after Kankri?
What? No, that'th-
...that'sss not...what I meant.
You were his Iusus. Trollmom.
He was never spoiled.
You fought with him, taught him the hard lessons before the world could.
And what makes you think Vantas's custodian didn't?
Uh.


Just try it. I'll tell you when to stop.
It's non-fatal. This is all non-fatal.
But dislocating someone's arm?!
The principle of it offends me.
So they can't dislocate your head, yes.
Hunch.
Pretty pitiful, huh?
Don't you dare say a word to anyone!
I would never.
Not that you're even right.
Sure.


down-
ward strokes,
hook the
shoulder
I will
not do this
anymore!
The
hell you
won't!
He
apologized,
now go
back!


Good. Now both sides of mine are blunt...
But you can still—
Just one thing.
I don't have time-
Just one thing, to remember.
"Look into someone's eyes to know them, not their color."


13. ① "Question your masters."
② "Raise up those beneath you."
③ "True kindness is colorblind."
④ "Just try to remember that, okay? Just think about it when you're with others."
⑤ "Fuck off."
Not tonight.

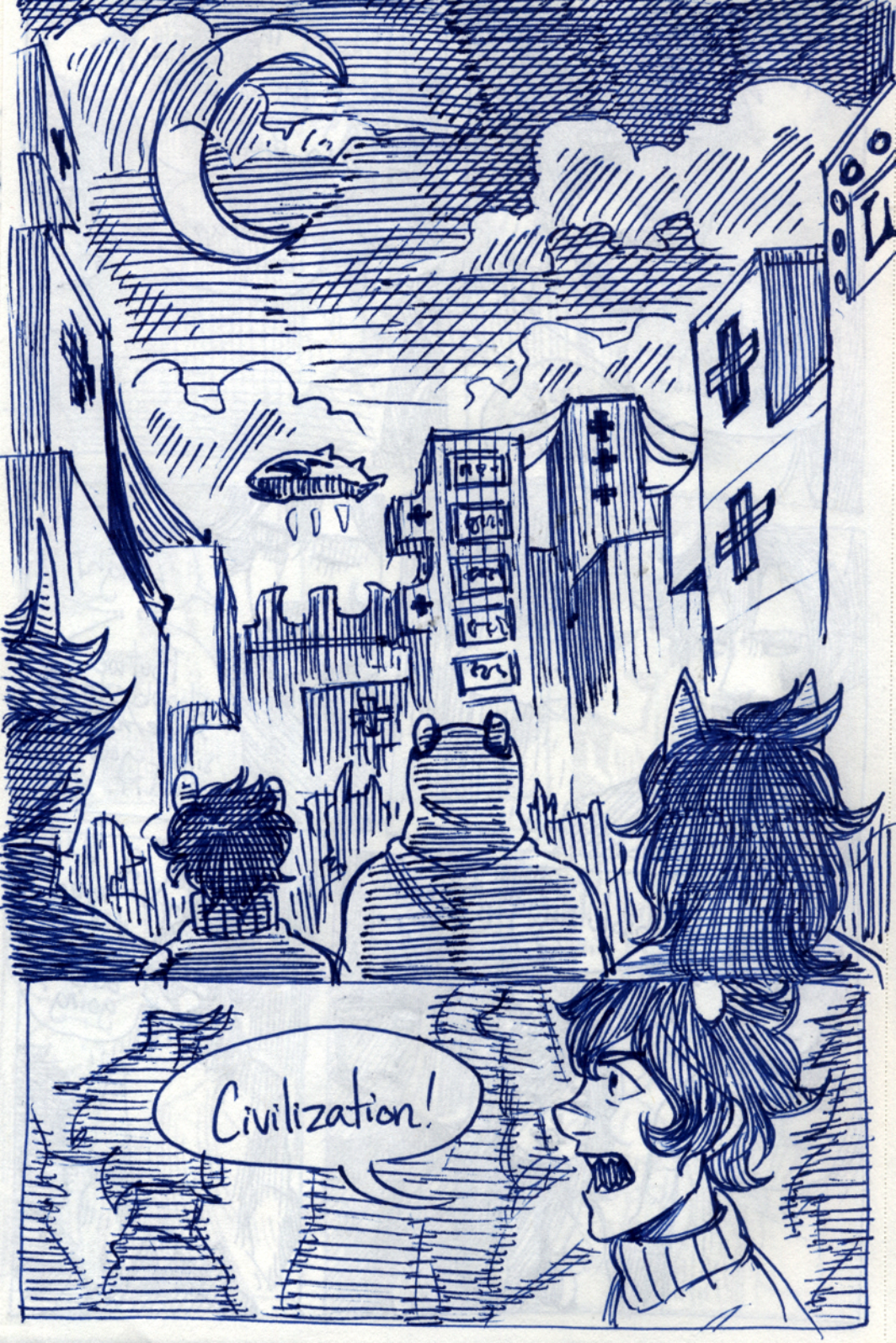

No one's listening.
Sshhh, yes they are. Or they will.
I know we can be better than this, but sometimes—
I know.
If they won't even listen to five words, then how—?
With patience!
...Did you learn that from hunting?
Of course!
...oh, my all.
my beloved.
my diamond...


NO RED SWEATERS


Mom, come on!
No, Kankri.
Please.
Sopor for Mituna's nightmares!
I'm fine.
A metal-worker for Meulin!
I've fought with less.


Medicine for Vantas's fever!
Finally.
We'll be fine.
...Alright.
(Yes!)
But Meulin and I will be the only ones going!
Oh-! But it's one of the most integrated areas!


Besides, it's like you've always said—
We're safer together!
That's something I'd tell you when you were a wiggler.
So it doesn't apply anymore?
Alright.
But we should stay together since you said it.
Absolutely.
We'll be careful!
this is an awful idea
So, where did you say we are going?


Civilization!


Not really.
More trolls in one place means more violence.
Cities are unpredictable places.
True! You should keep your eye on Vantas.
Parrim, I told you-
...he can fight now. If it comes to it.
My point is that it shouldn't come to that, Mituna.

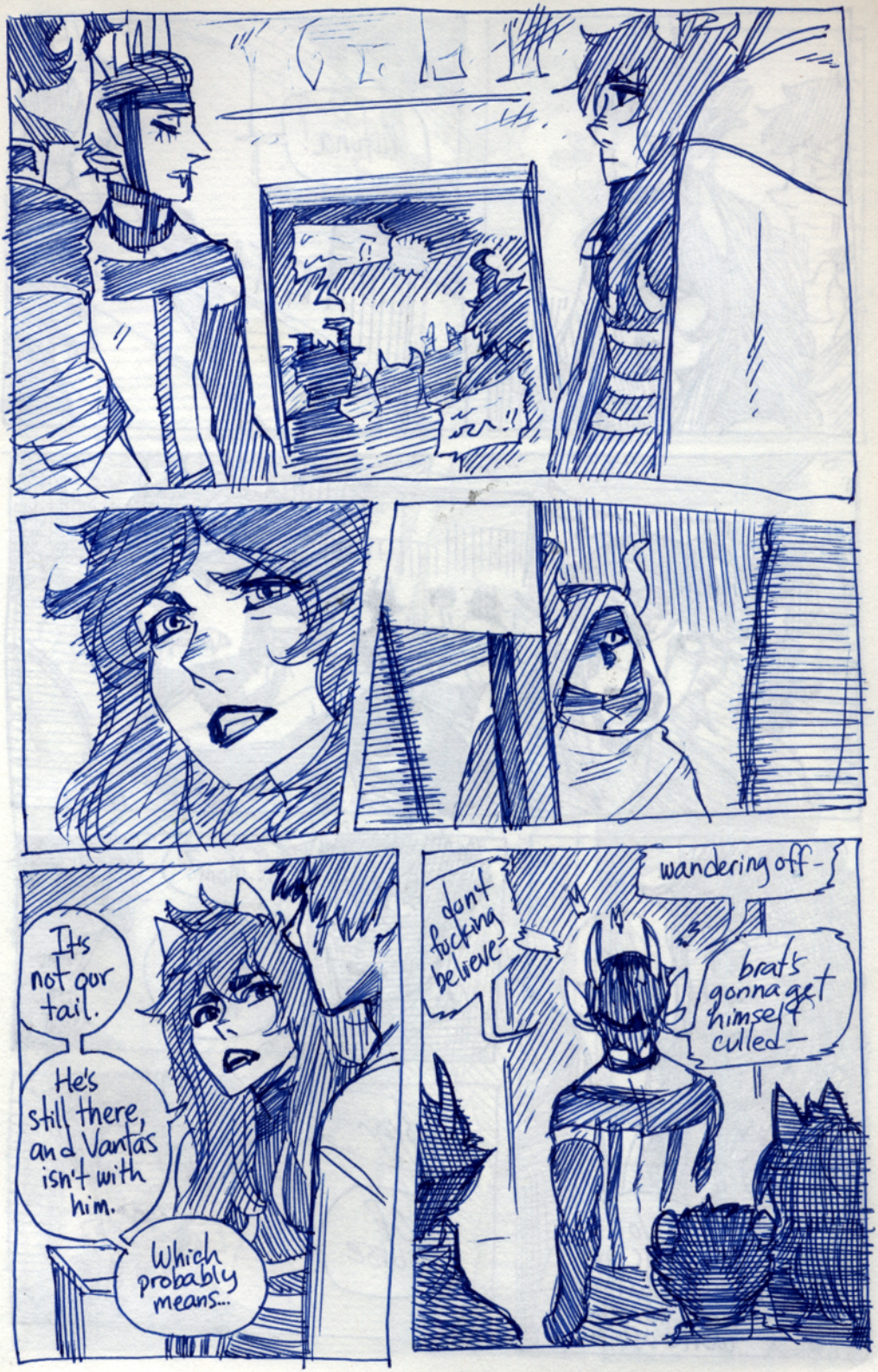

Fine, fine.
?
...Brat, stay with me and... don't talk to strangers okay?

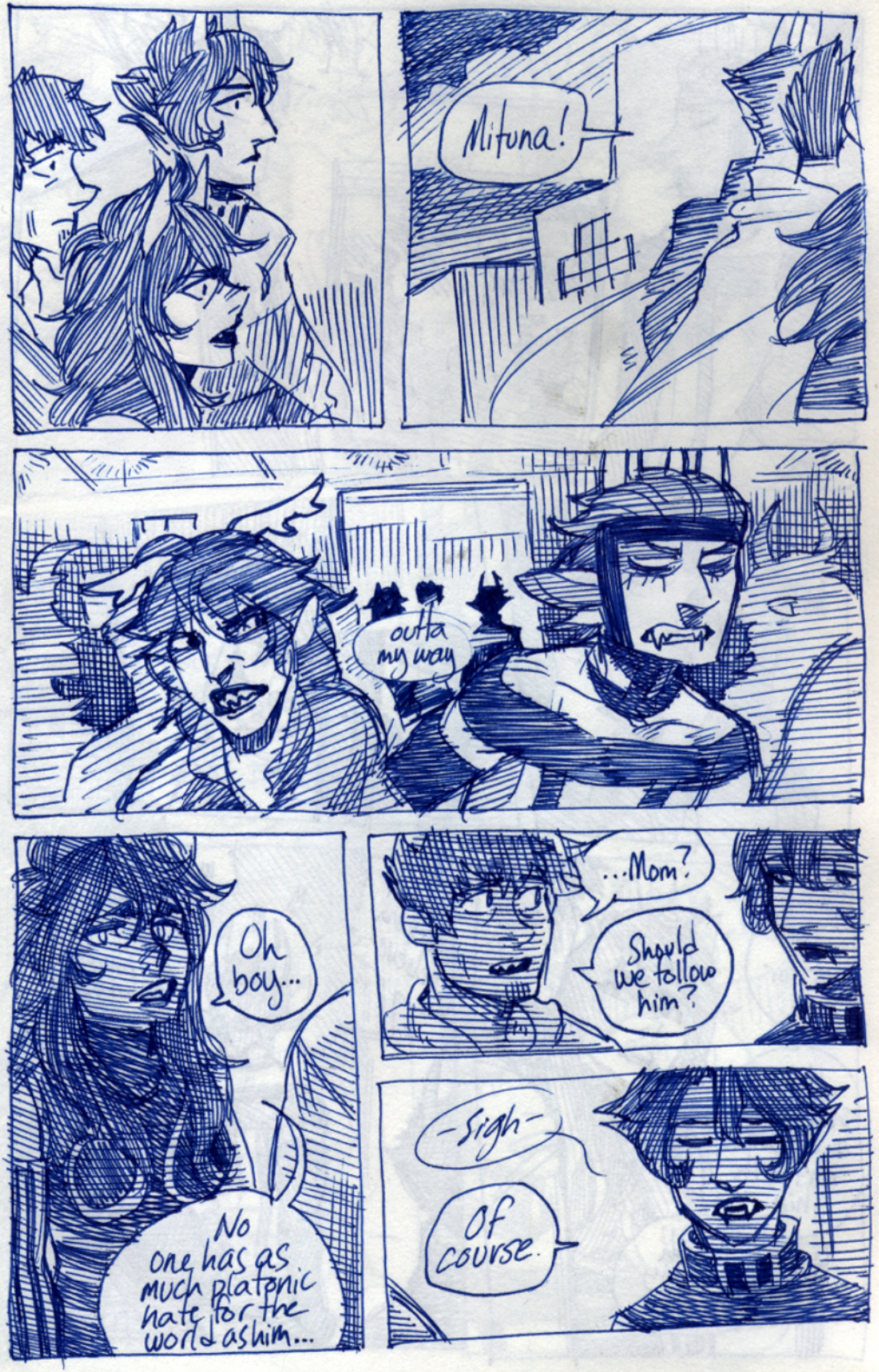

You realize it's terrifying when you do that, right?
I don't know what you mean!
So the swanky high-blood act was totally unintentional? Yeah, right!
That shop-keeper probably got stunned into thinkin' you're a seadweller or something! 'Course, in like five minutes, he'll snap out of it— "oh shit she was a jade!"


Kankri...
I want to go in there.
Absolutely not!

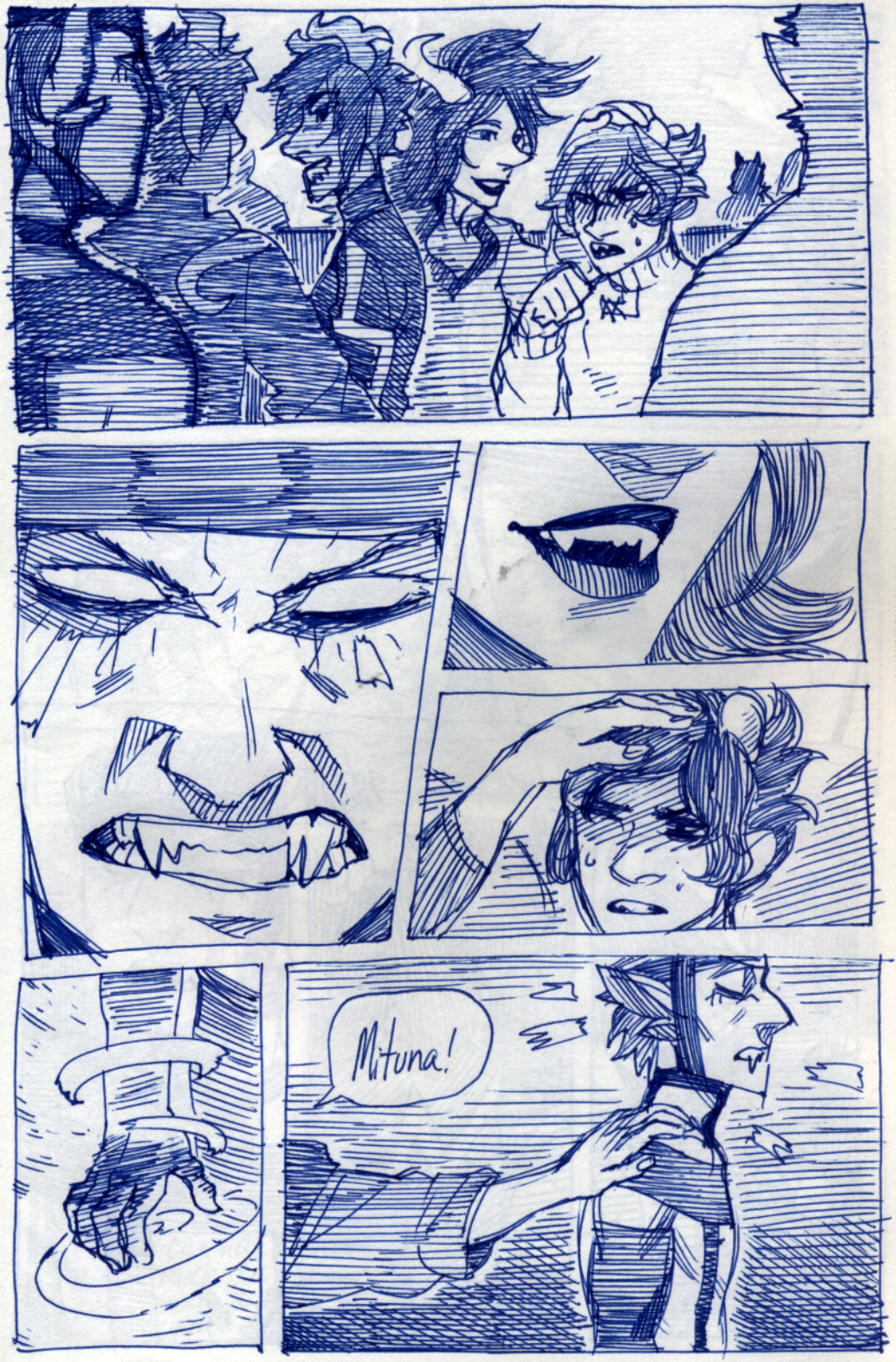

But Mom-
Come over here. Just come here. Listen to me.
But-
No buts!
We're not doing this right now.
Did you see how many colors-
Vantas is sick.
...Im sorry, you're right.
Yeah, I'm with Porrim.
Kankri, someone's-
Ugh.
We need to just go back!
But could I just go in or my own-
Don't be ridiculous! I've been fucking sparkin' all day!
He's still there, we need to shake him
Are you listening?
Mom, just for a bit!


O-O-OKAY. Alright.
What is everyone trying to say?
Mom?
You can't prioritize your own wants over our safety.
You're right, I'm sorry.
You said that already, and then you started arguing again.
I mean it! We should go back, I understand
Mituna... anything else?
I'm tired and angry.
Yes you are.
Vantas?
Mewlin?
Someone is following us. We need to either confront him or shake him off.
Thank you. We'll handle it first.


wandering off-
don't fucking believe-
brat's gonna get himself culled-
It's not our tail.
He's still there, and Vantas isn't with him.
Which probably means...

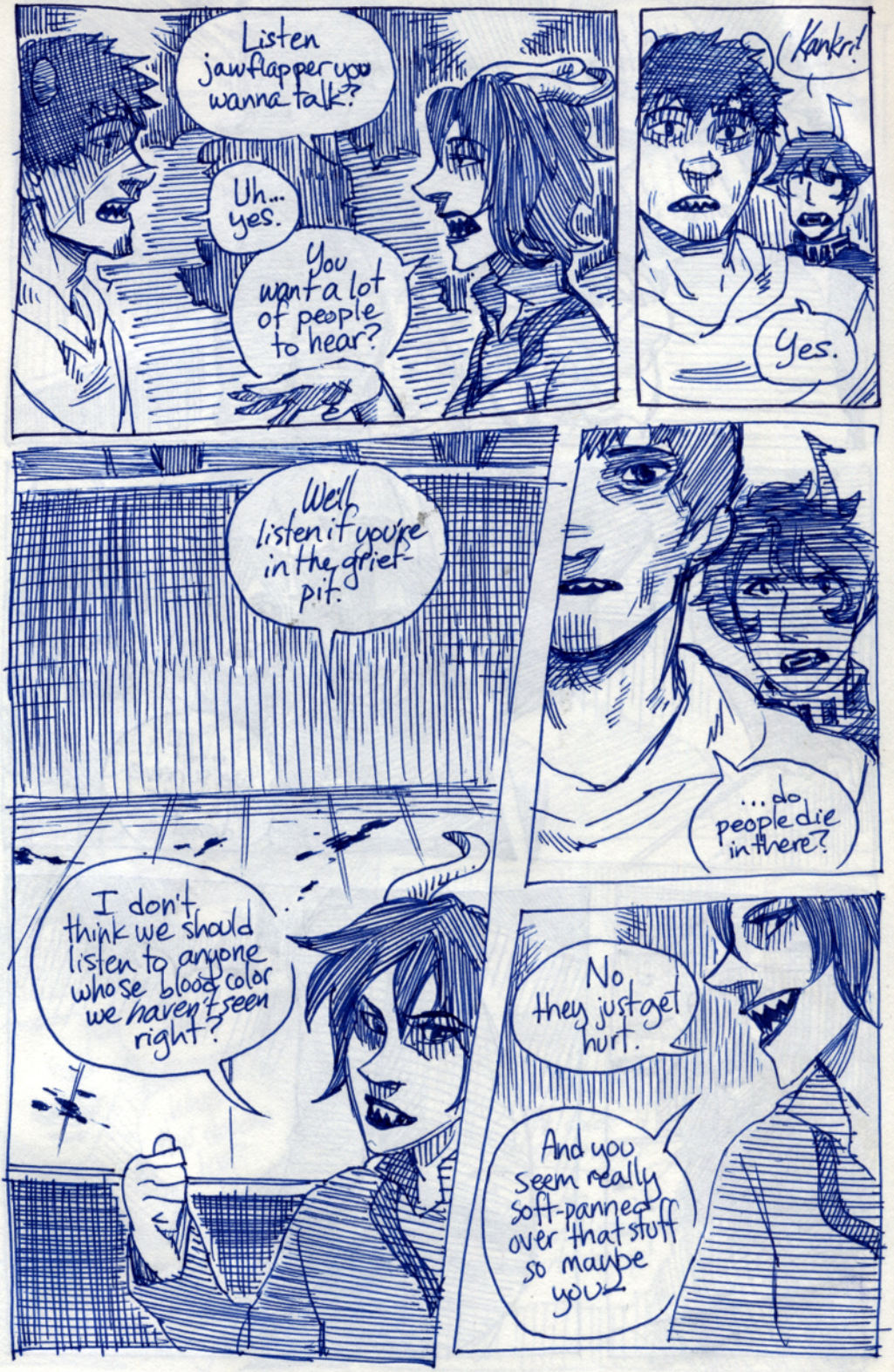

Mifuna!
outta my way
...Mom?
Should we follow him?
Oh boy...
No one has as much platonic hate for the world as him...
-Sigh-
Of course.

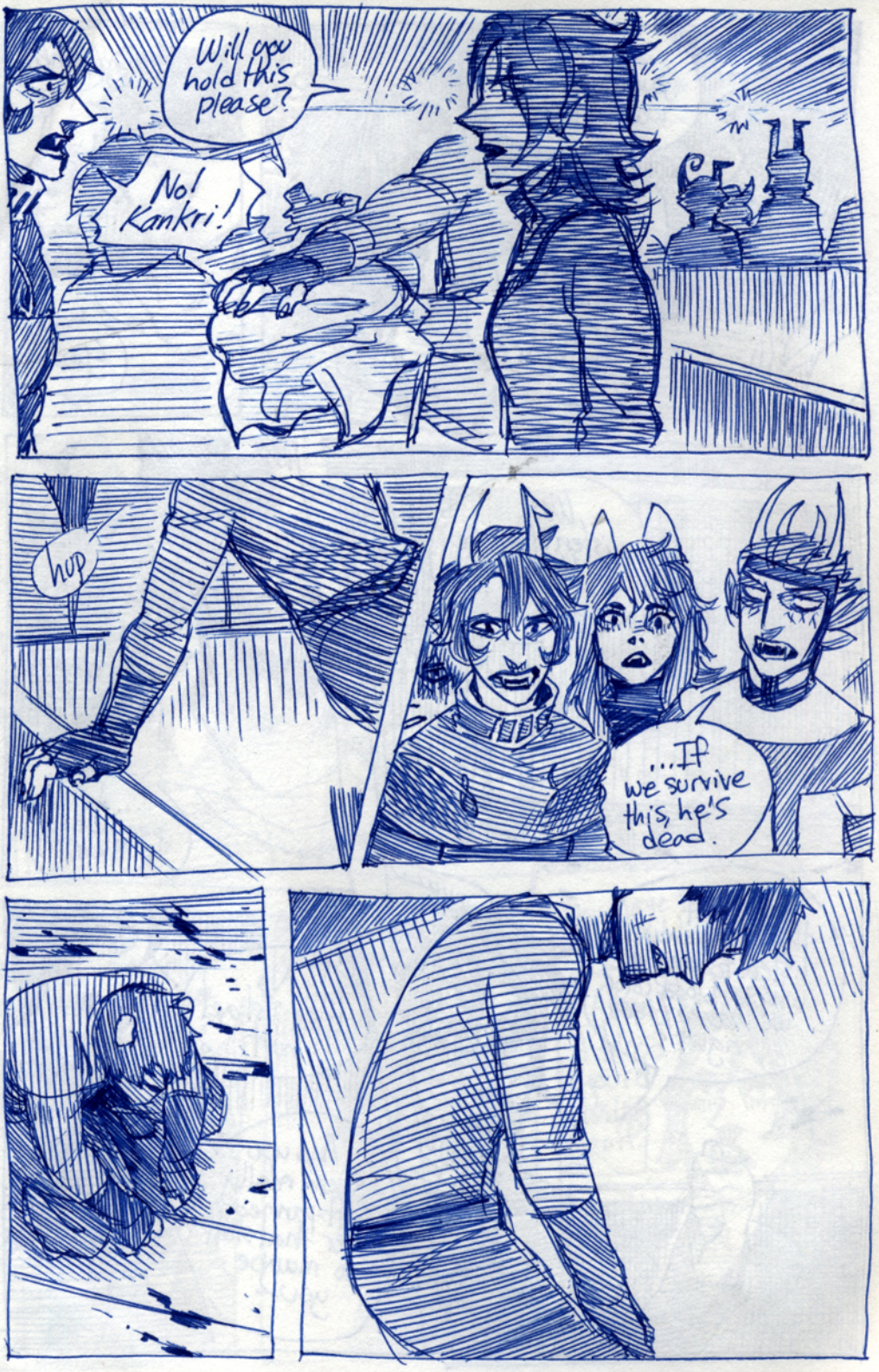

get im.
get im!
don't fuck wi
mc man it wo
end well
get outta
my
fifty caesars
on the big wh-
blood.


Mituna!


What?
Easy there!
But Vantas...
Excuse me.
He's with us.
Oh really.
Yes. And he has a moirail.
koff koff
Right and I suppose they're here are-
Uh.

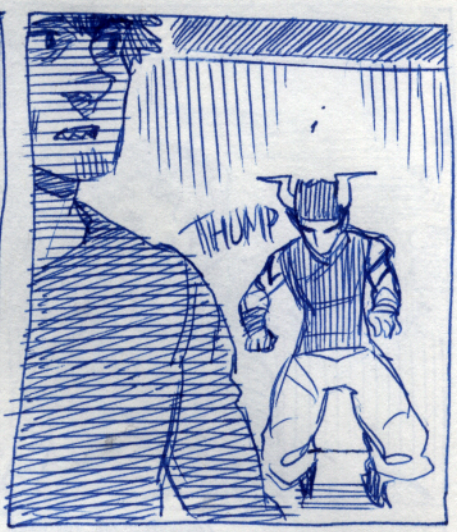

...tsk.
Fine take him.
hey now
uff!
You didn't have to push him. He's sick.
Oh, really.
Please go on.
...Okay.
Oh no.
Just because someone is unwell is no reason to act as their care-taker, you know?
At least... not in that way. Even if he didn't, uh, already have a palemate.
You have to ask yourself... if he'd been in a green shirt, would you-
Okay A-blood you're pissing me off.
But-


Listen jawflapper you wanna talk?
Uh... yes.
You want a lot of people to hear?
Kankri!
Yes.
Well listen if you're in the grief-pit.
I don't think we should listen to anyone whose blood color we haven't seen right?
...do people die in there?
No they just get hurt.
And you seem really soft-panned over that stuff so maybe you-


Will you hold this please?
No! Kankri!
hup
...If we survive this, he's dead.


Excuse me!
I just want you to remember a few things. That's all.
I'd like a moment to talk to all of you!
I know you don't want to hear this...
...but I want to tell you a few things!
Who's this douche bag?
The laws we follow are wrong!
The color of someone's
Someone get down there and shut him up!


To see a wiggler, you wouldn't know their color!
Not without the ones we-


THUMP




Oh, great.
..What?


Kankri won't pull his sickles on a fistkind user.


So? He said he had another specibus.
Oh, he does. But...


...it's what he uses when he's not defending against someone who's trying to kill him.
Because he doesn't want to hurt them.
Well? Ain't you got somethin' to grief with?
This is it. Palmkind.
Suit yer damn self, then.
please.
...I know you're angry. All of us are. Because the world isn't as it should be.
WHAK


...So we take it out on the ones we're told are below us.
Mutant.
You're not even on the spectrum! So-
-don't-
THUMP
-talk-
-like-
THUD
KRAK
you KNOW!
THWAK
THUMP
THUMP


So...
The anger you're feeling...
hhh
hhh
I think I know.
You don't think I understand, but I do.
Shut up.
...where's it coming from?
...I can't watch, grubling.
what? why?


Because...
...He's too pitiful like this.


Yer... cryin'?
I-what? -sniff- Oh. No, it's just... a reaction to getting hit in the face, repeatedly. -sniff-
...I've had more opportunities to find that out than you think.
Being a mutant, you know. (ow)
So I know why you're doing this.
I know why all of you do this!



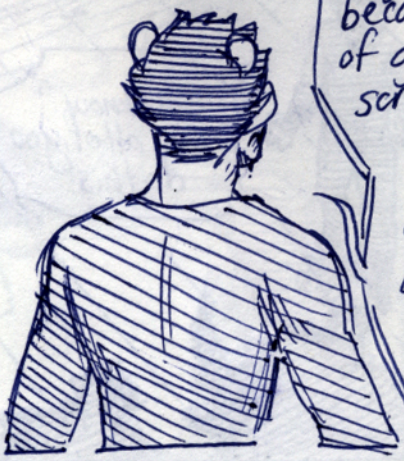
It comes from the rage that comes from the pain that comes from the knowledge that the world just isn't what it damn well should be.

Its that empty ache left by the enemy or quadrantmate or crush who was culled for no good reason.



Its the overwhelming, crushing awareness that there's nothing we can do about it, that the balance will never shift, and that every caste will always weigh down on the one beneath it, until the ones at the very bottom can no longer bear the weight!

We don't even think to fight the source of all of it because there are thousands of ghosts, millennia of oppression, screaming at us not to!



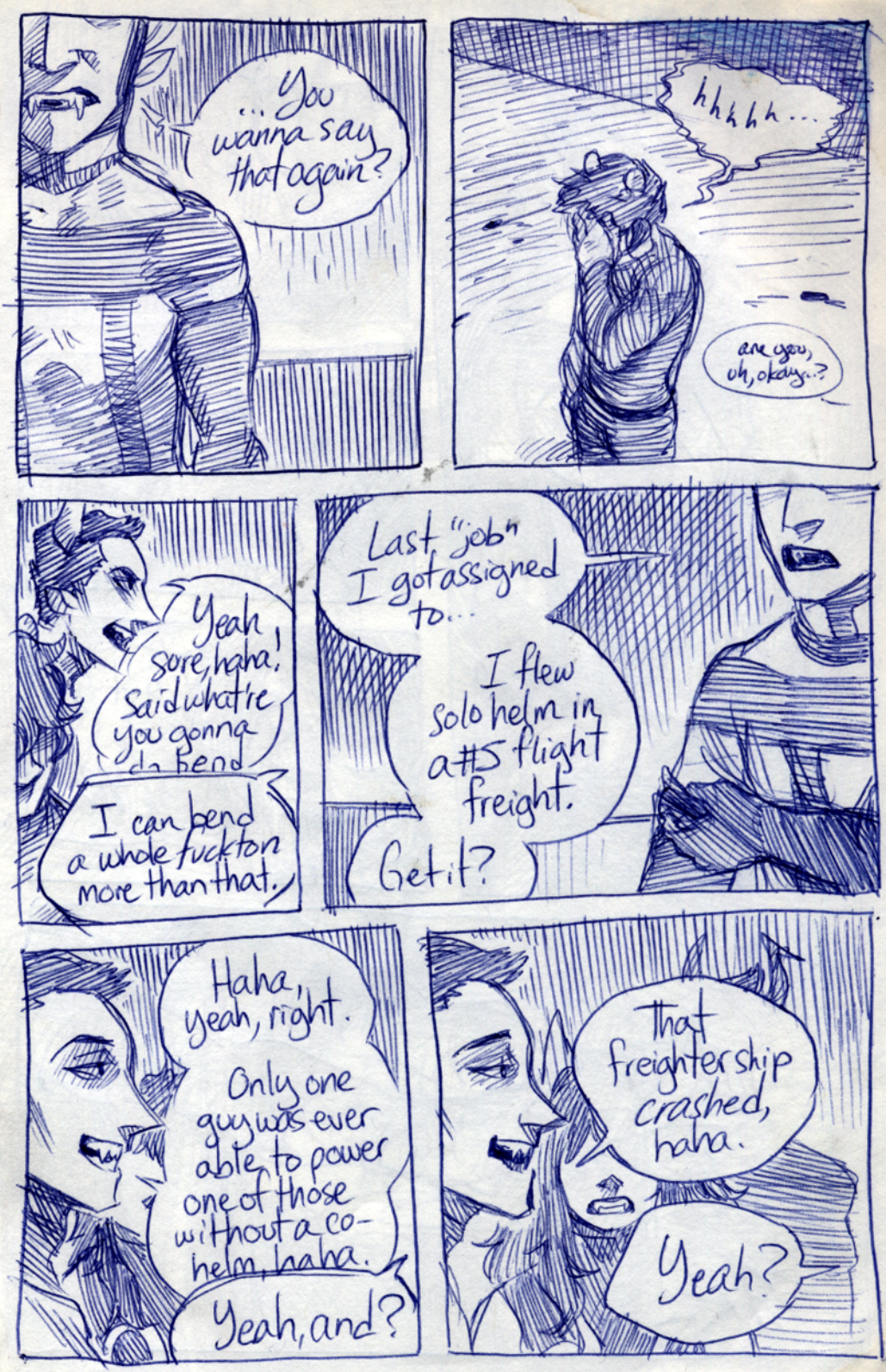
So we fight everything else. We push in any direction we can. We accept brutality as part of our nature, but the lie is just as intolerable as reality, and I-

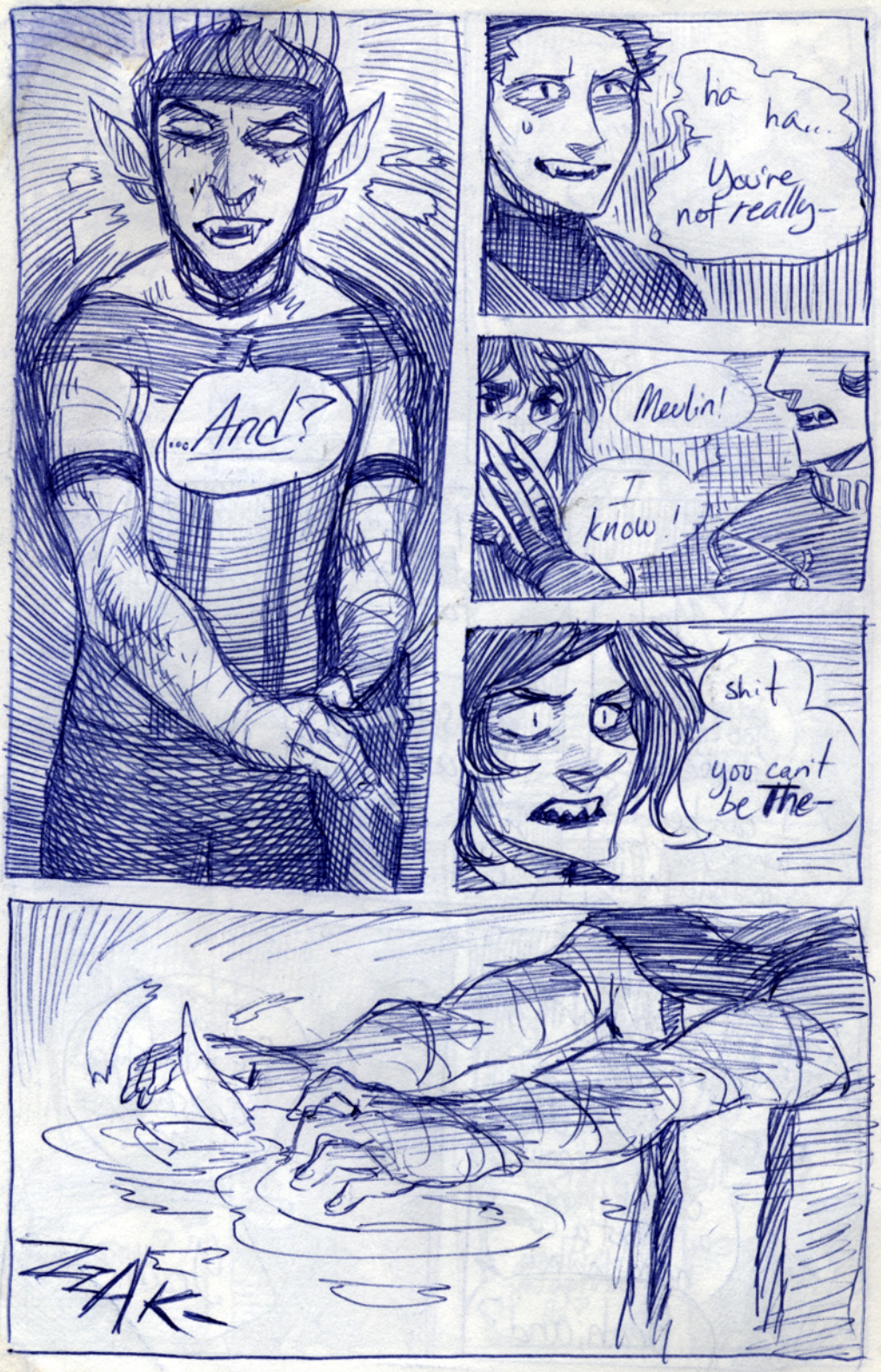

...I can't just stand by...
...and let you do this to yourself!
I won't!

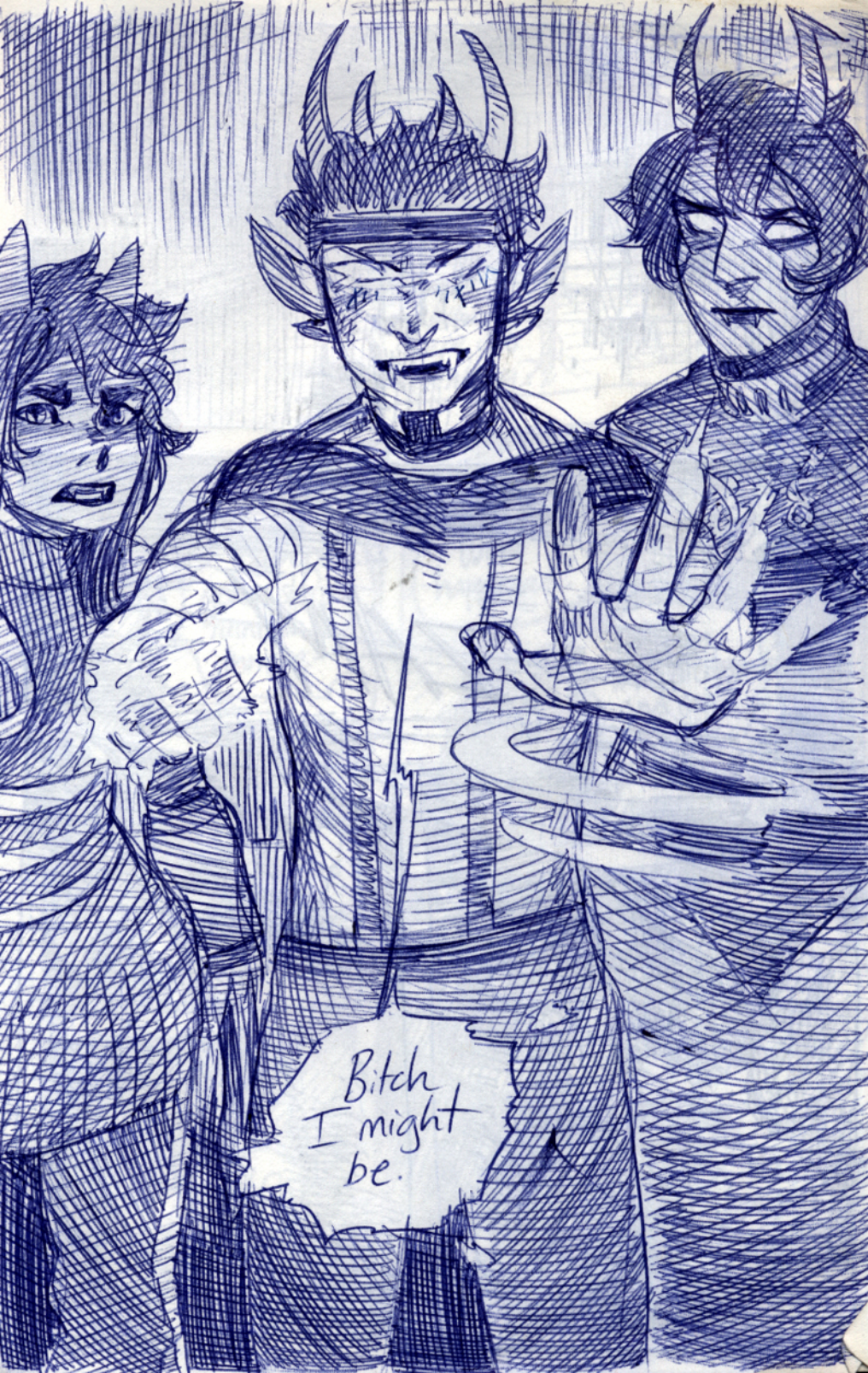

uh.
That was definitely more than six words. (wow.)
They...
?
They're still... listening...

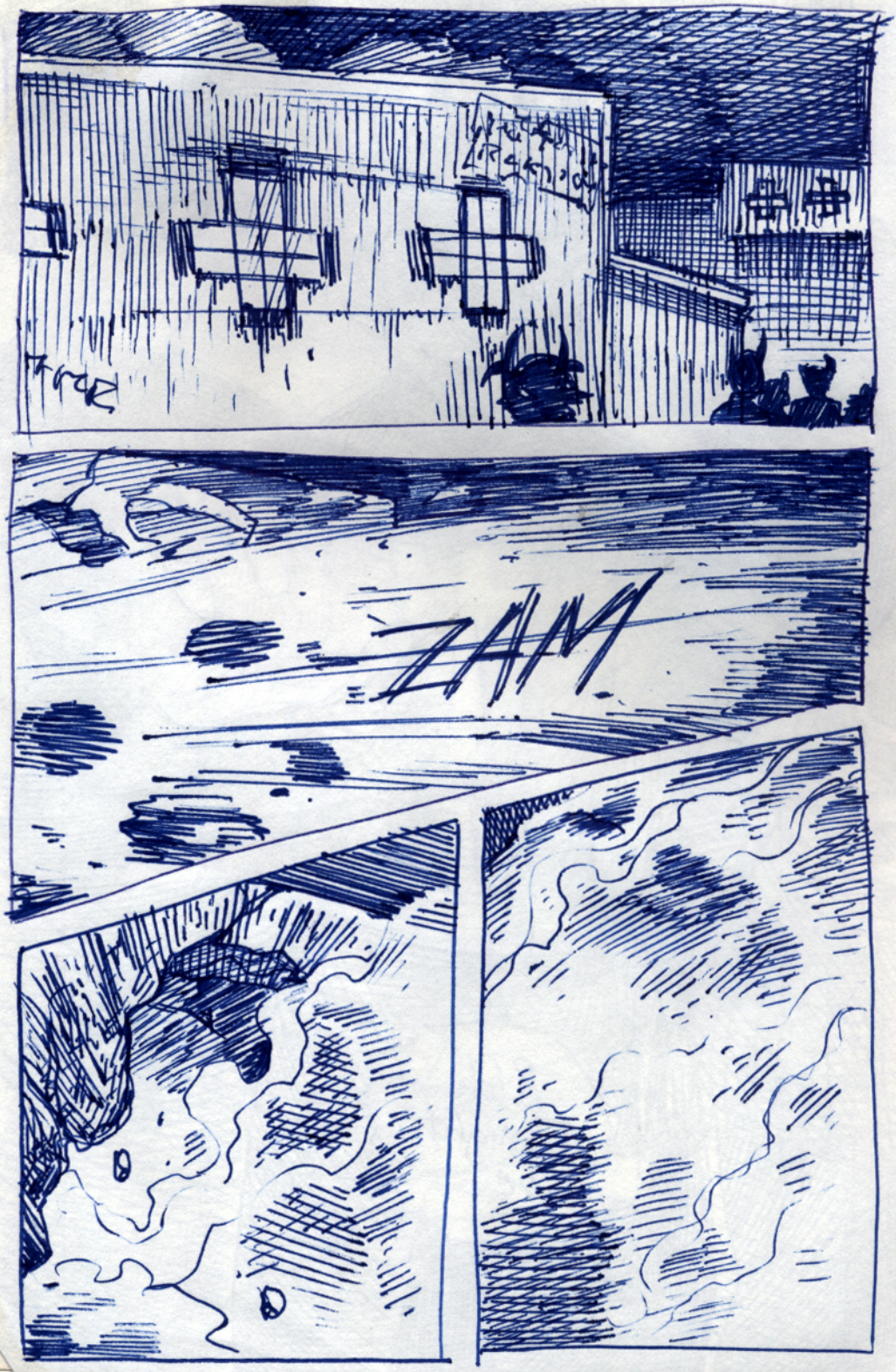

grrr...
This is bullshit!
Are you going to just stand around like a soppy wiggler?!
That's not what we're here to see.
Someone throw the other little freak in!
oh
Excuse me?
No!

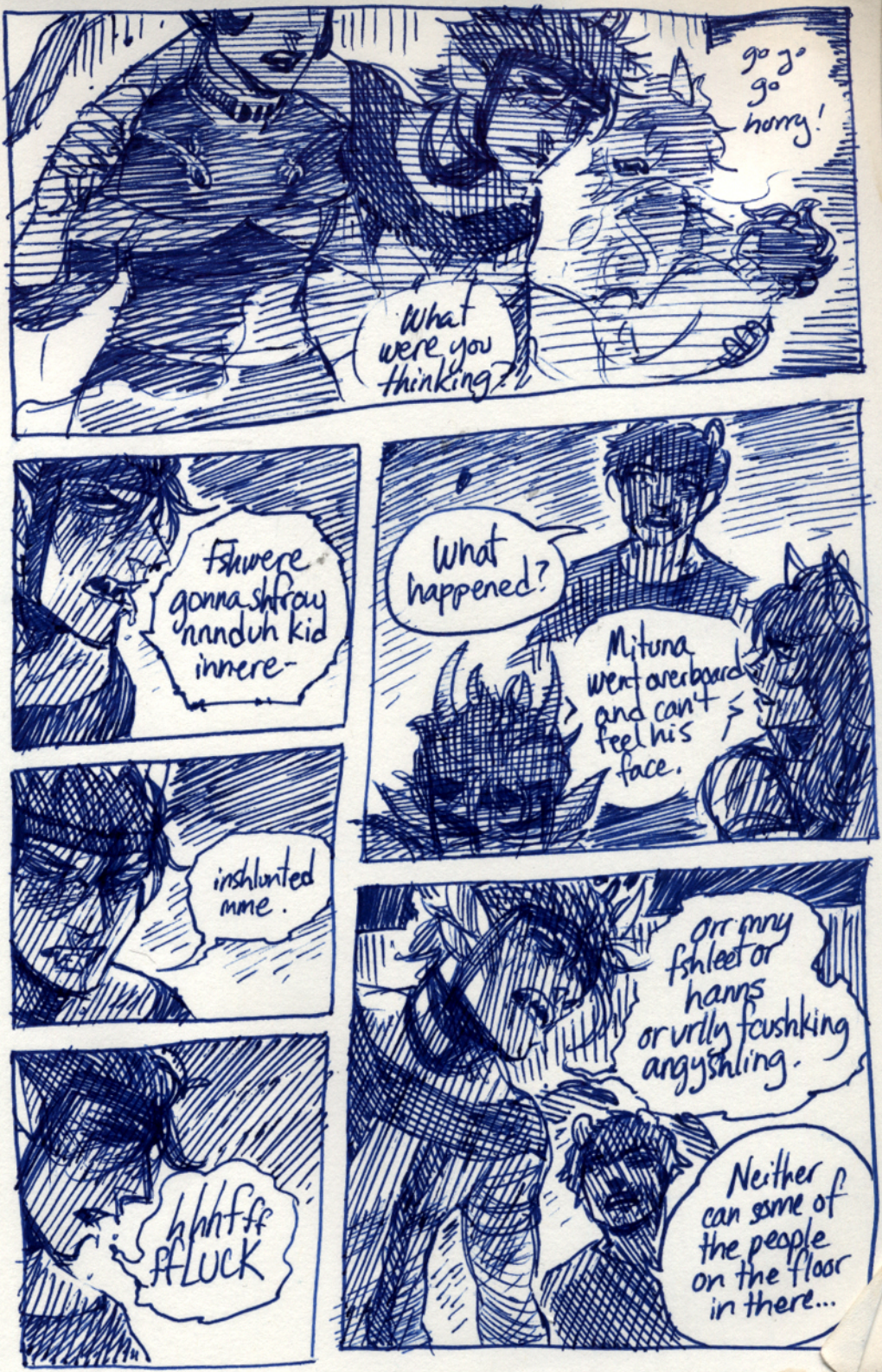

C'mere
Hey kid, can you grieve?
Hey!
Wait- what- hkkkoff-!
I SWEAR-
Mituna, let me try talking-
-IF YOU DON'T LET HIM GO-
MITUNA, PLEASE!
apsionic?
what're you gonna do?
bend a nutrition scoop?


...You wanna say that again?
hhhhh...
are you, uh, okay...?
Yeah sure, haha! Said what're you gonna do bend
I can bend a whole fuckton more than that.
Last "job" I got assigned to...
I flew solo helm in a #5 flight freight.
Get it?
Haha, yeah, right.
Only one guy was ever able to power one of those without a co-helm, haha.
Yeah, and?
That freighter ship crashed, haha.
Yeah?

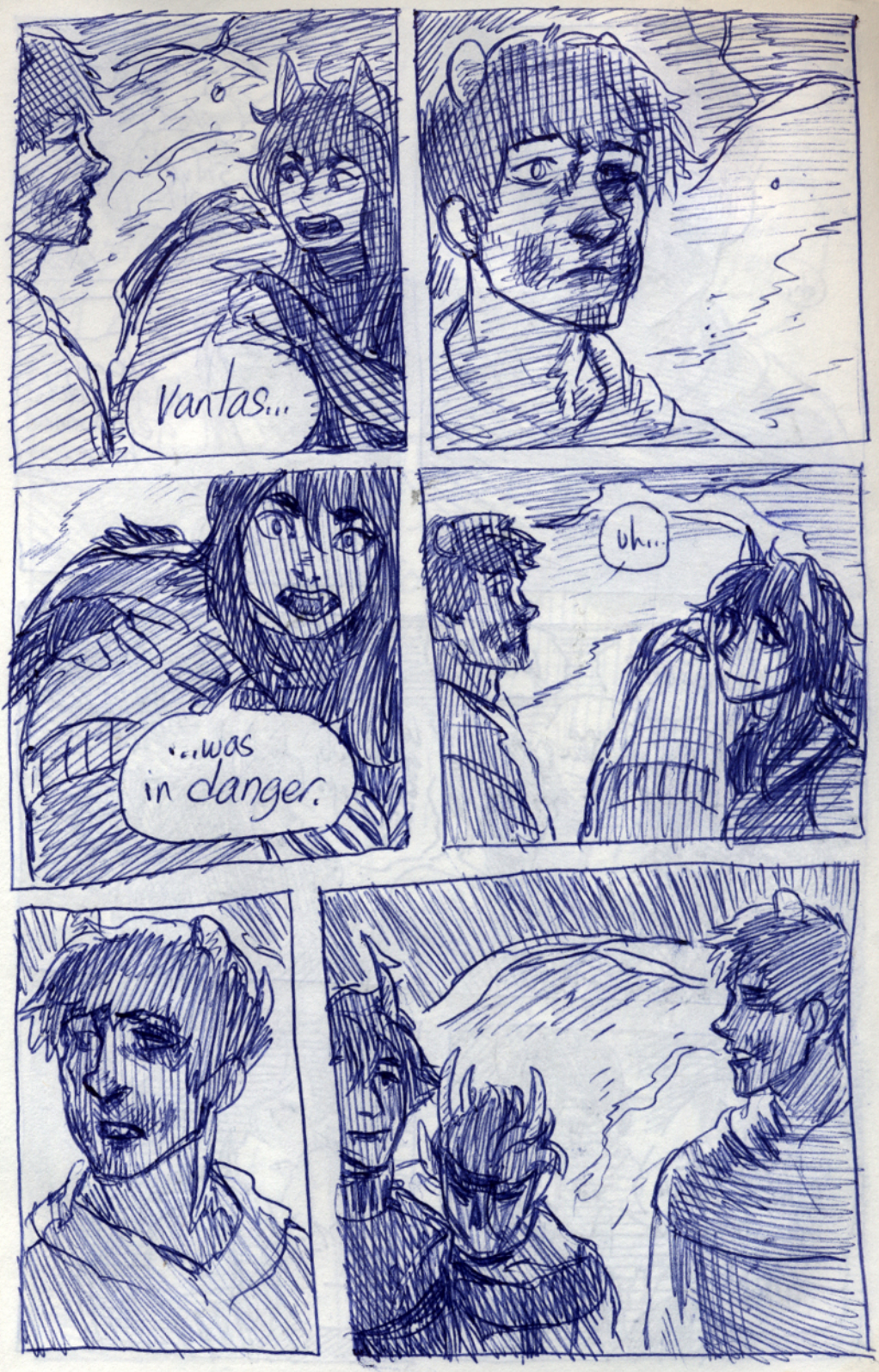

...And?
ha ha...
You're not really-
Merlin!
I know!
shit
you can't be the-
ZAK

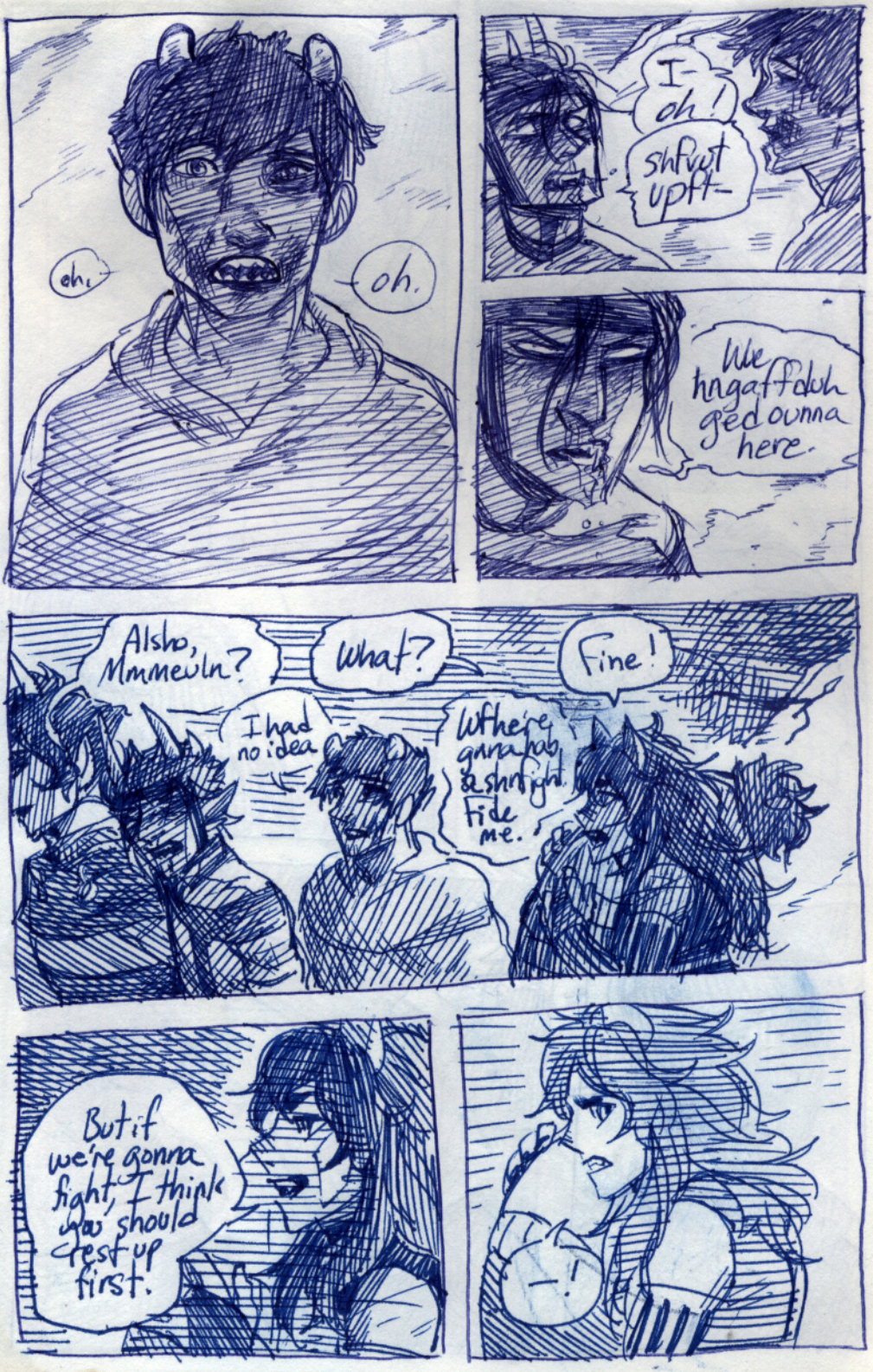

Bitch I might be.


ZAM

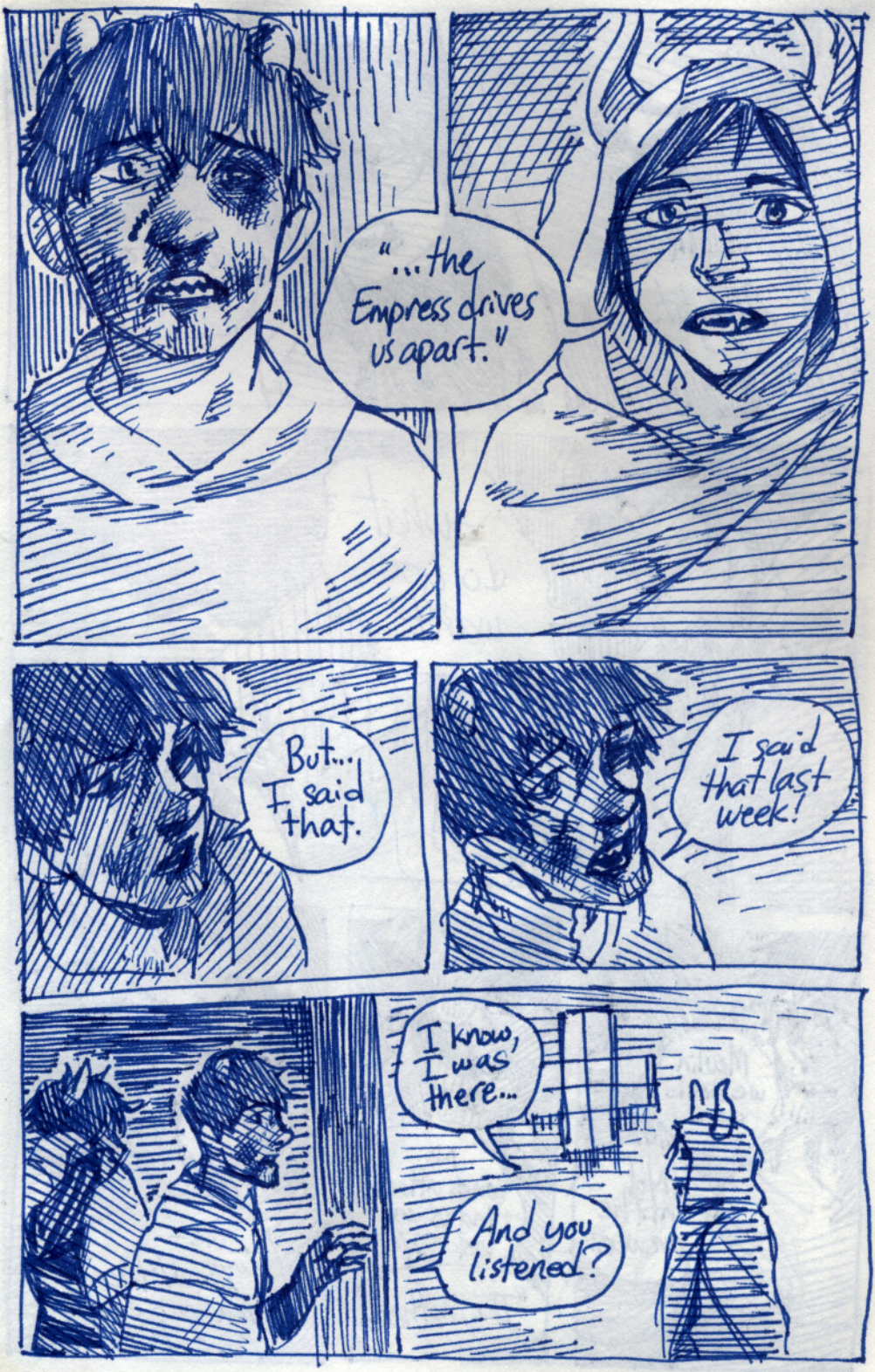

go go go hurry!
What were you thinking?
fshwere gonna shtraw nnnduh kid innere-
What happened?
Mituna went overboard and can't feel his face.
inshlunted mme.
orr mny fshleet or hanns or urlly foushking angyshling.
Neither can some of the people on the floor in there...
hhhfff ffLUCK

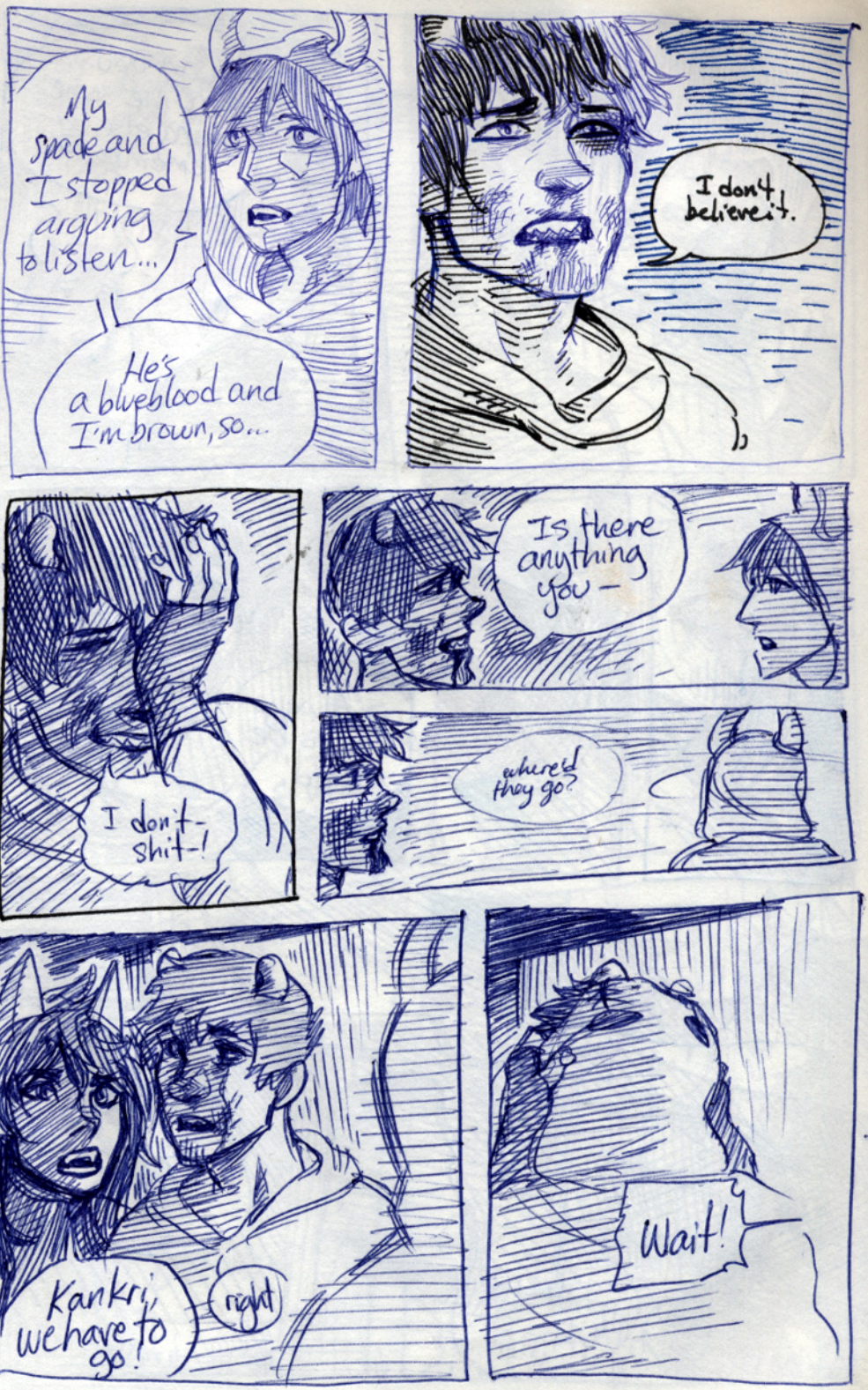

shnerfs 'em right.
-sniff-
How can you say that?
Th— they were really listening to me!
I could have stopped them, why did you—
Kankri.
...what.
...I know. I'm sorry.
Vantas was in danger.
I didn't...
ow
Listen.

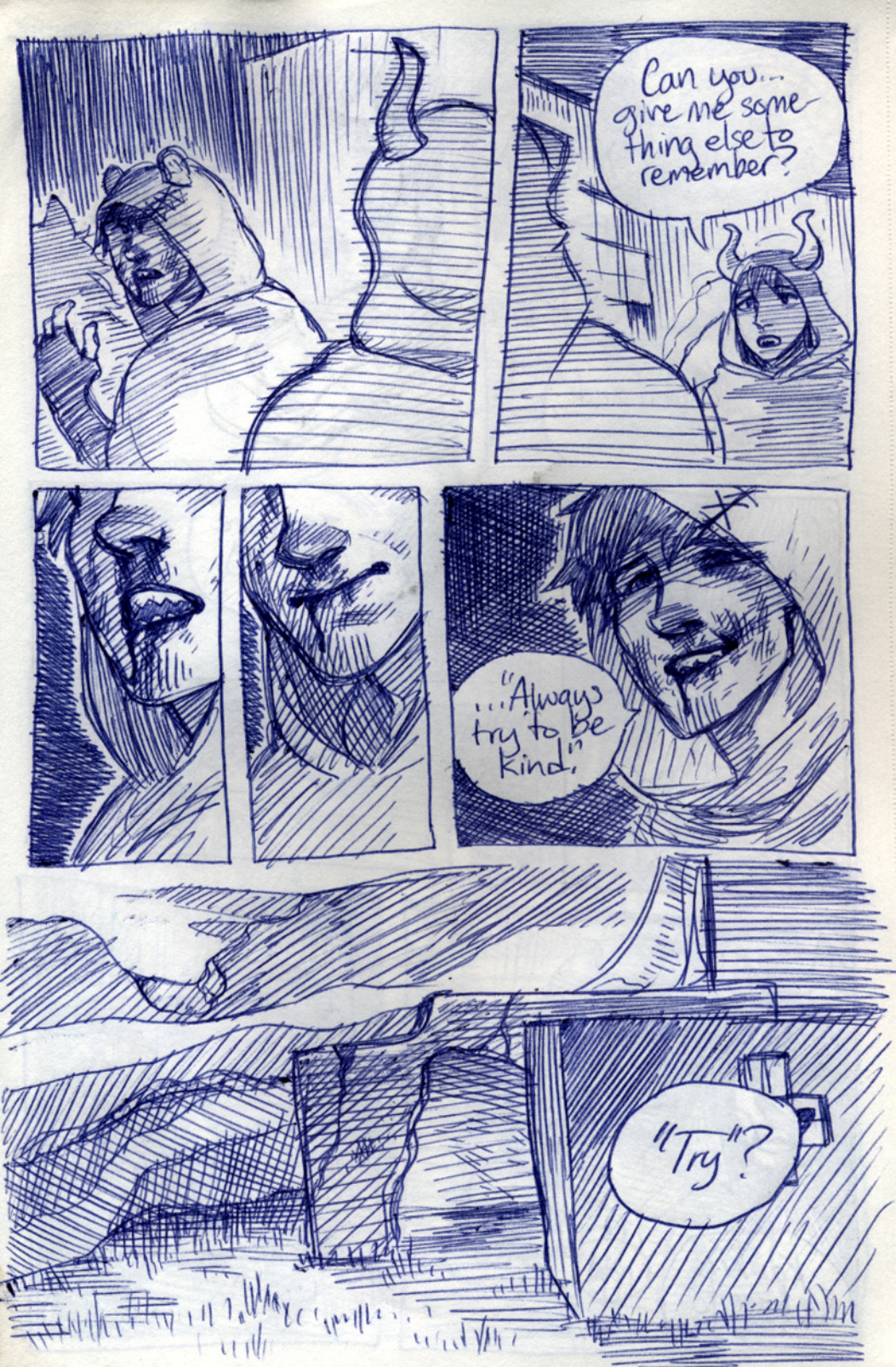

Vantas...
...was in danger.
Uh...


oh.
oh.
I-
oh!
shfvut upff-
We hngaffduh ged ovnna here.
Alsho, Mmmewln?
What?
Fine!
I had no idea
Wthere gunna hab a shrfight fide me.
But if we're gonna fight, I think you should test up first.
-!


Alright..
-once and for all-
-what do you want?
Merlin, we should go...
Not until he answers!
No one's attacking us, and look- I've
"The Mother"-
...uh-
"The Mother made us equal, but..."


"...the Empress drives us apart."
But... I said that.
I said that last week!
I know, I was there...
And you listened?


My Spade and I stopped arguing to listen...
He's a blueblood and I'm brown, so...
I don't believe it.
I don't- shit-!
Is there anything you -
where'd they go?
Kankri, we have to go!
right
Wait!


Can you... give me some thing else to remember?
"Always try to be kind."
"Try"?

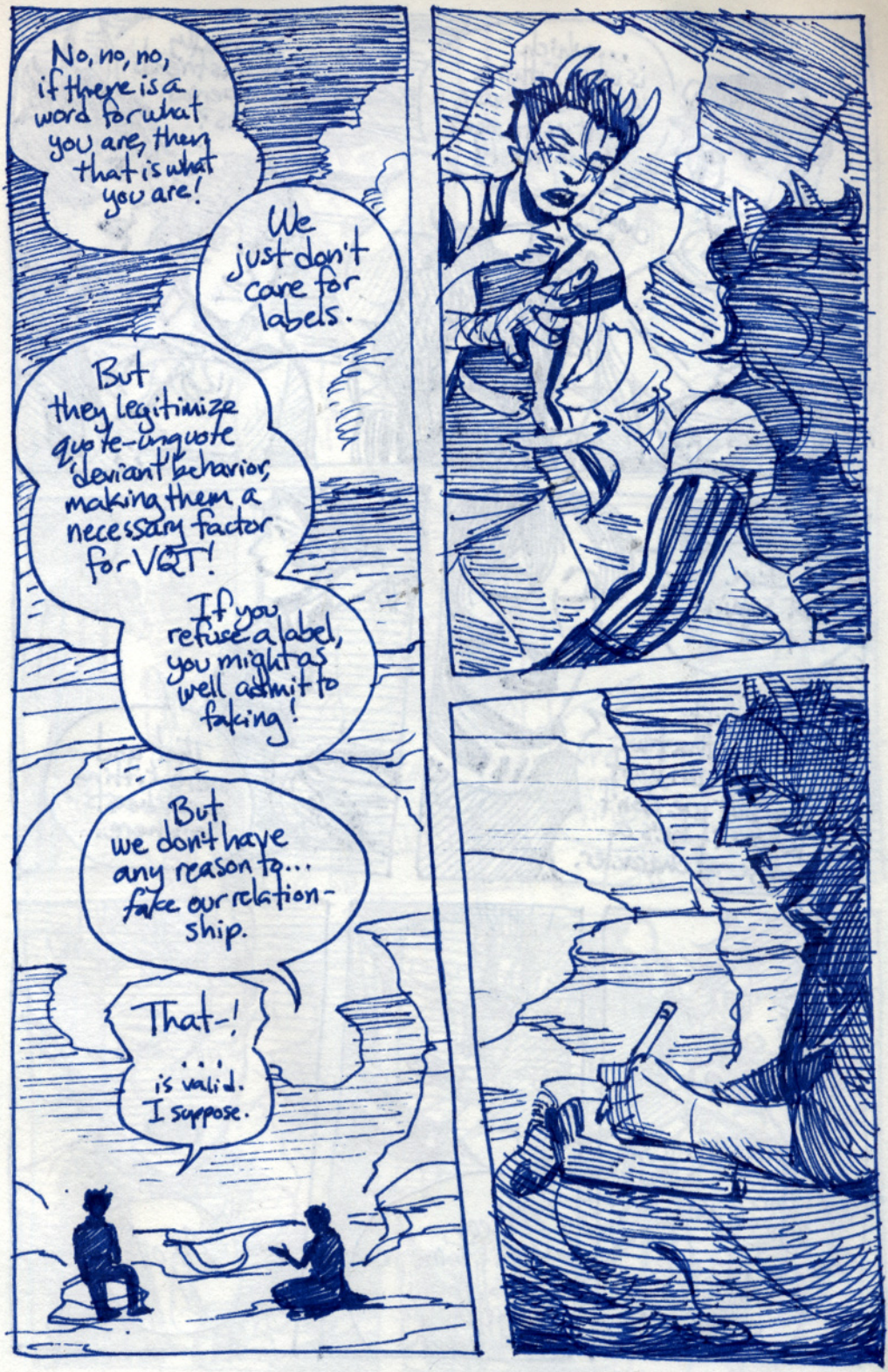

You could stand to put more pressure on them.
"Oh, I tried" isn't an acceptable excuse for problematic behavior.
If it's true, then it has to be.
Just so long as they're ready to keep trying over and over...
...and over and over...
Beloved!
Hm?
It's your turn to cook


hhhnnnnnnkgh
fuuuuu...
hhhnnnsngkhhh-!
ffuuuu...
Vantas, I need you to sit up.
Vantas.
nngh...
Feeling better?


Uh... yeah.
...No nightmareth.
Vantas, I swear—
You've been asking for this medicine for three nights!
Porrim's been trying to give him the stuff for an hour.
oof
well of course he won't take goddamn fuckin' for the feeding, FUCK!
We're still having that fight, Mewlin!



End of CHAPTER 4


No, no, no, if there is a word for what you are, then that is what you are!
We just don't care for labels.
But they legitimize quote-unquote 'deviant' behavior, making them a necessary factor for VQT!
If you refuse a label, you might as well admit to faking!
But we don't have any reason to... fake our relationship.
That-! ... is valid. I suppose.

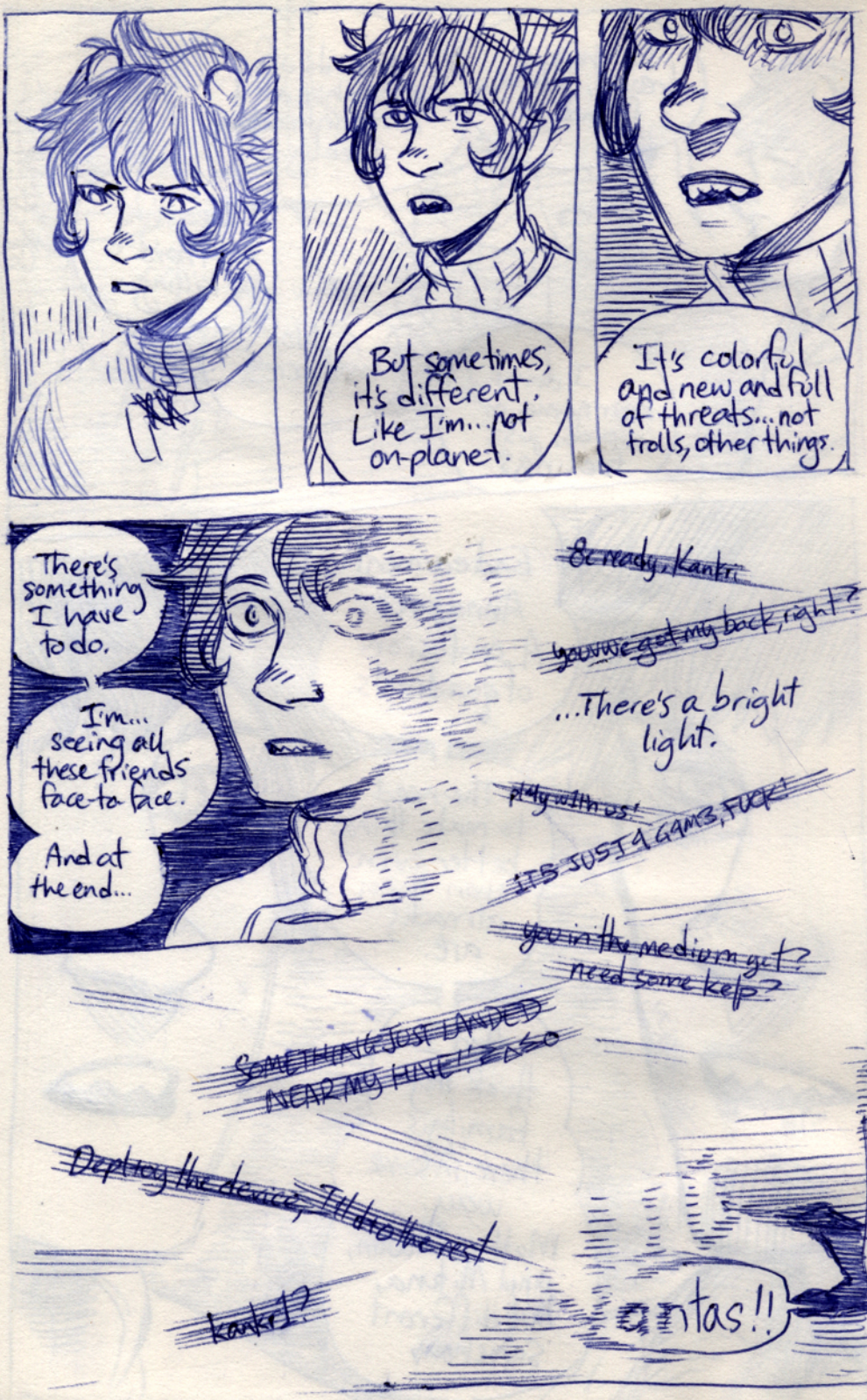

...which is why I think you should have sent us to meet them first!
You really think his friends are imperial spies?
chomp nom nom scarf
I'm not saying that.
I'm just saying... that we know we can trust him, but we don't know if he's a judge of character.
That, and we're sitting quackbeasts out here.
This again?
No one will find us out there!
Yeah, but if someone does, they'll have all the high ground
All of it.


...He has a point.
...oh.
!!
-But, uh...
...I'm sure it'll work out fine!
Right, Vanitas?
uh.
well.
maybe.
Uuuuu Uuhh
dear-

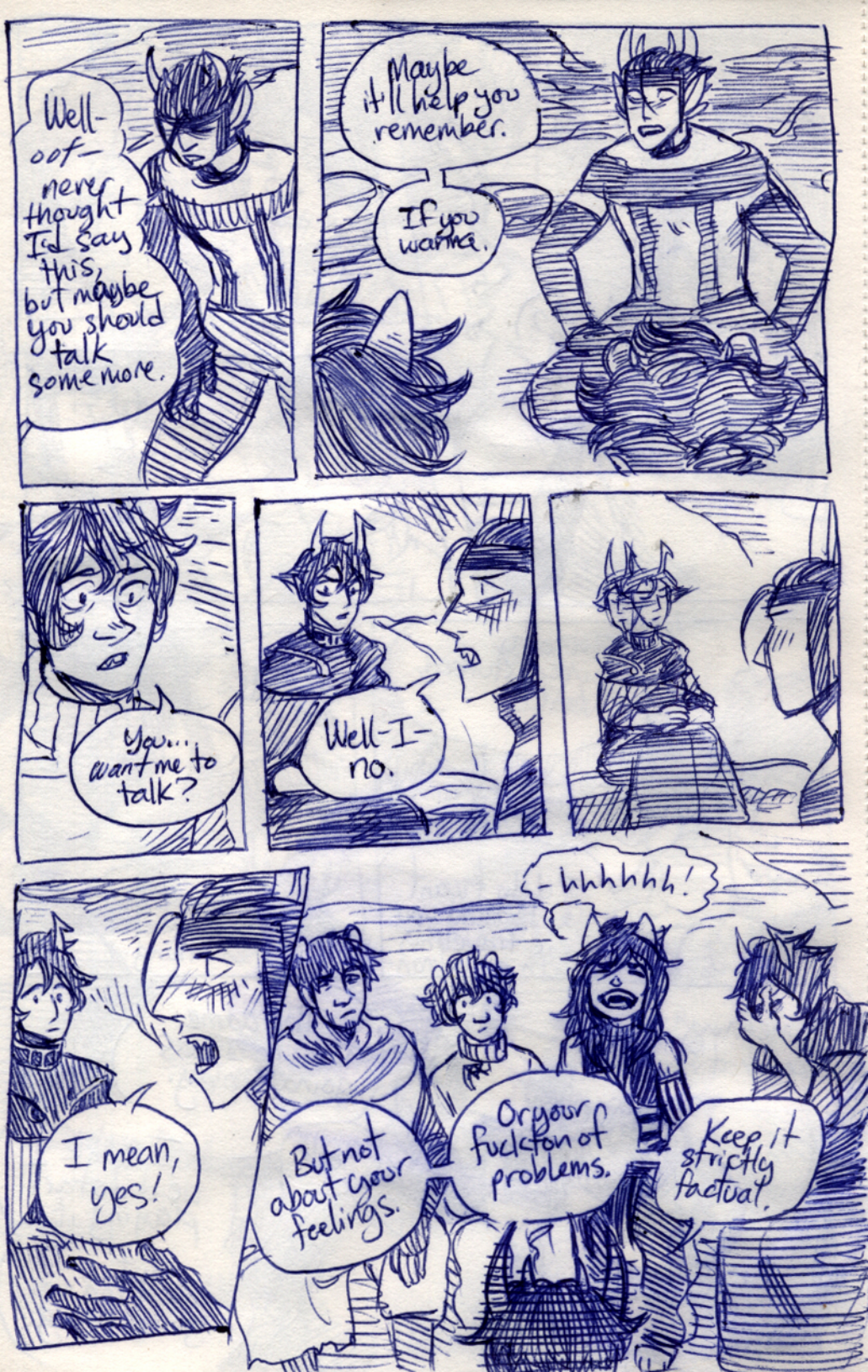

I mean, you did capture the attention of that crowd...
...which is more than I ever managed.
Come on, Vantas, you're getting better!
Excuse you
Please remove your arm.
At this rate you could go up and preach with my beloved!
Even without any Prophetic dreams!
...merlin.
Prophetic... what?


Uh, well—
hmm
—not prophetic, per se.
hmm
Oh for fuck's sake, just tell him!
Who cares if he thinks you're crazy?
I agree.
He's traveled with us for a quarter of a sweep, and he deserves to know.
Thank you, Porrim.
Alright.
Well...
What you have to know, Vantas, is that I didn't start down this path for no reason.
Well I might have anyway, but I had these dreams...


In these dreams, I have friends.
Friends of every hue and caste, interacting freely.
They fight, but there's no killing.
No massacres.
I don't hear names or words, just feelings.
Endearment. Annoyance. A confusion of quadrants.
The need to make things better even than they already are.
And I think my family is there, in some way. Mother, Merlin, and Mitena, but different somehow.


But sometimes, it's different. Like I'm... not on-planet.
It's colorful and new and full of threats... not trolls, other things.
There's something I have to do.
I'm... seeing all these friends face-to-face.
And at the end...
...There's a bright light.
play with us!
IT'S JUST A GAME, FUCK!
you in the medium yet? need some help?
Deploy the device, I'll do the rest
kankri?
Pontas!!


..hhHHH!
Are you okay?
I... yes... I..
No, you're not.
I'm sorry if you're disturbed, Vantas.
I didn't want you to think you were traveling with a madman-
I- no, that's.. not it.
I just... remembered something.
"Something" like what?
...The game. The one I was going to play.
Yeah.
I think we did start playing it.
But... something was going wrong.


Well- oof- never thought I'd say this, but maybe you should talk some more.
Maybe it'll help you remember.
If you wanna.
You... want me to talk?
Well- I- no.
-hhhhhh!
I mean, yes!
But not about your feelings.
Or your fuckton of problems.
Keep it strictly factual.


Uh...
...fine.
Weird started playing...
but I started getting messages that some of my...friends were hearing loud noises. Crashes outside their hives.
And someone- someone was telling me... telling me...
...it was the end of the world.
Kankri!


-Huh?
They're here.
Time for you to start talking.
...Oh.
Alright.
I'm sorry, Vantas. Stay here.


Later, brat.
Hello.
Tarhel. Welcome back!
This is Fresh an
No, no more names... It's dangerous enough to know yours.


I don't know, I'd like to find out a little more about them!
Starting with what that one is holding.
Oh! It's just a-uh-
Signal beacon.
...Right?
Tocsin?
Well, it's just-it's for-it's-
-Anything!
It could be for anything!


Well, it hasn't been activated, so that could be true, but-
Then it's fine!
You can have it back.
After you listen to everything I have to say.
No, he can't.
Mother-!
Kankri.
...Alright, we'll keep it. Sorry, I... got a bit carried away.
Tarhel, why don't you all sit down?

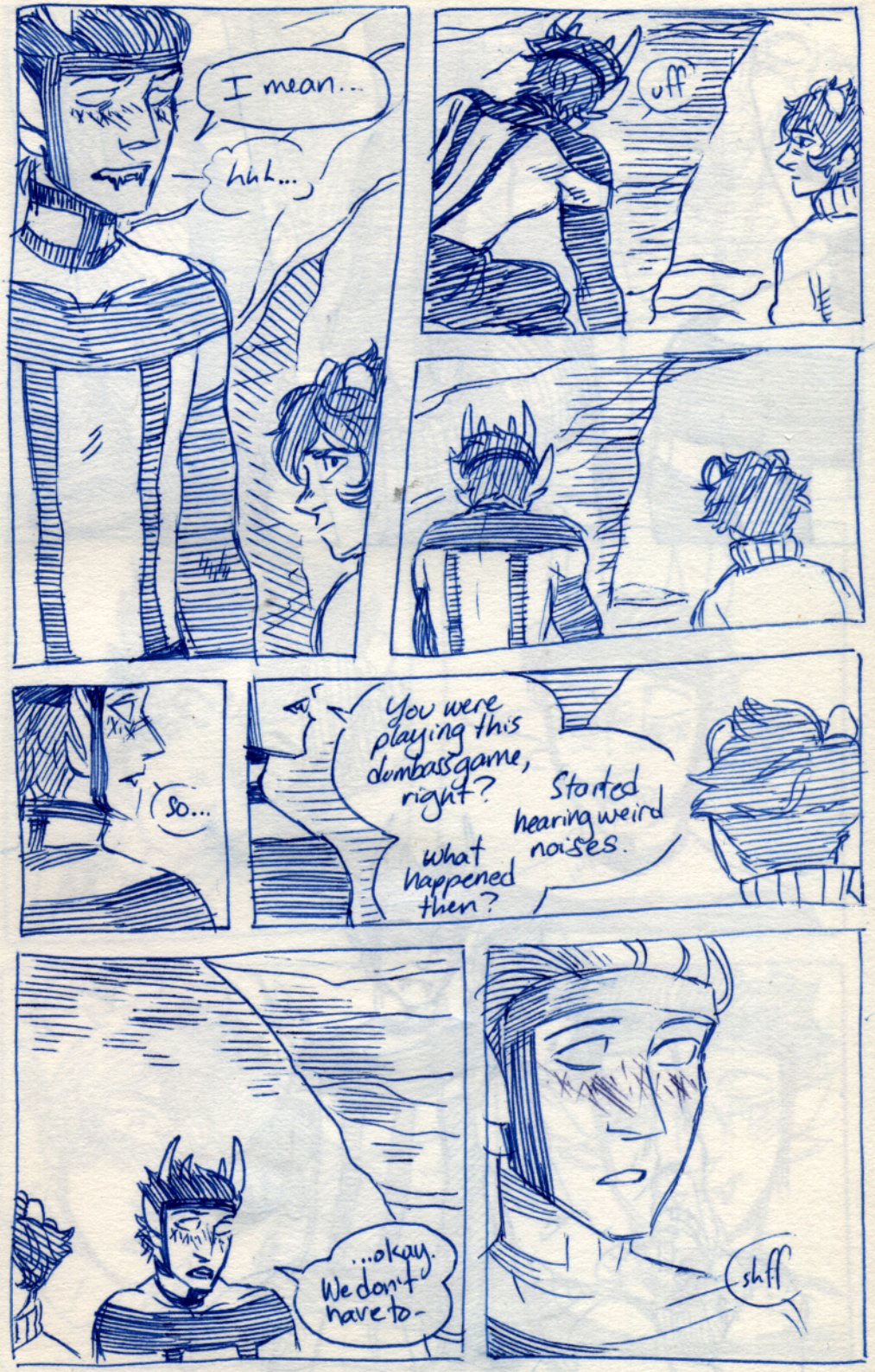

Tonight I wanted to talk about...
The Condescean and he once there
hen they say she's thy
actually mean that she was a troll
really isn't a peed to vent to the
so, I
Then you know their standing in the fac
but when she disco
that he was a b
left to
Treat its
And I
I just think it's fra
ge you to
onsider t
ighb
way
other troll
cause kin
Right you're all s
are living proof o
So I know it's p

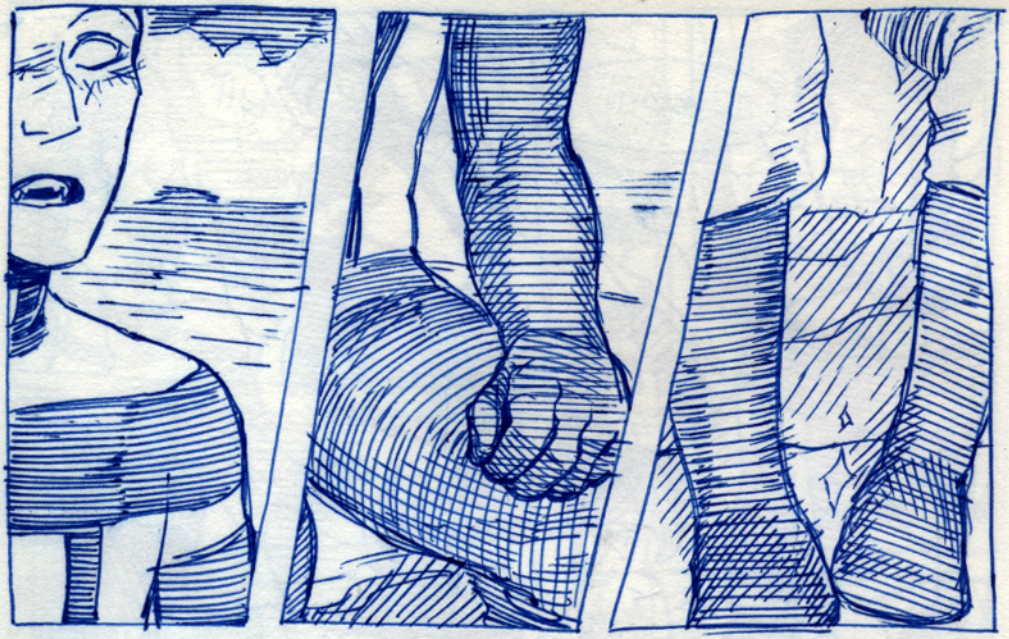

...So, in short...
I think what you're asking isn't really what we should do to make these changes, but why.
And I've already told you why in more words than I care to repeat.
Anything else?
...Alright.
Then we should move out.
thank you for coming
no, thank you!
Wait.


You can have this back.
WHAT?!
When- how'd he get that?
I don't know, I was writing!
Someone go and get it!
what?
he's gonna get us all killed!
. . .
porrim!
Keep it.


I know!
Alright calm down wigglers

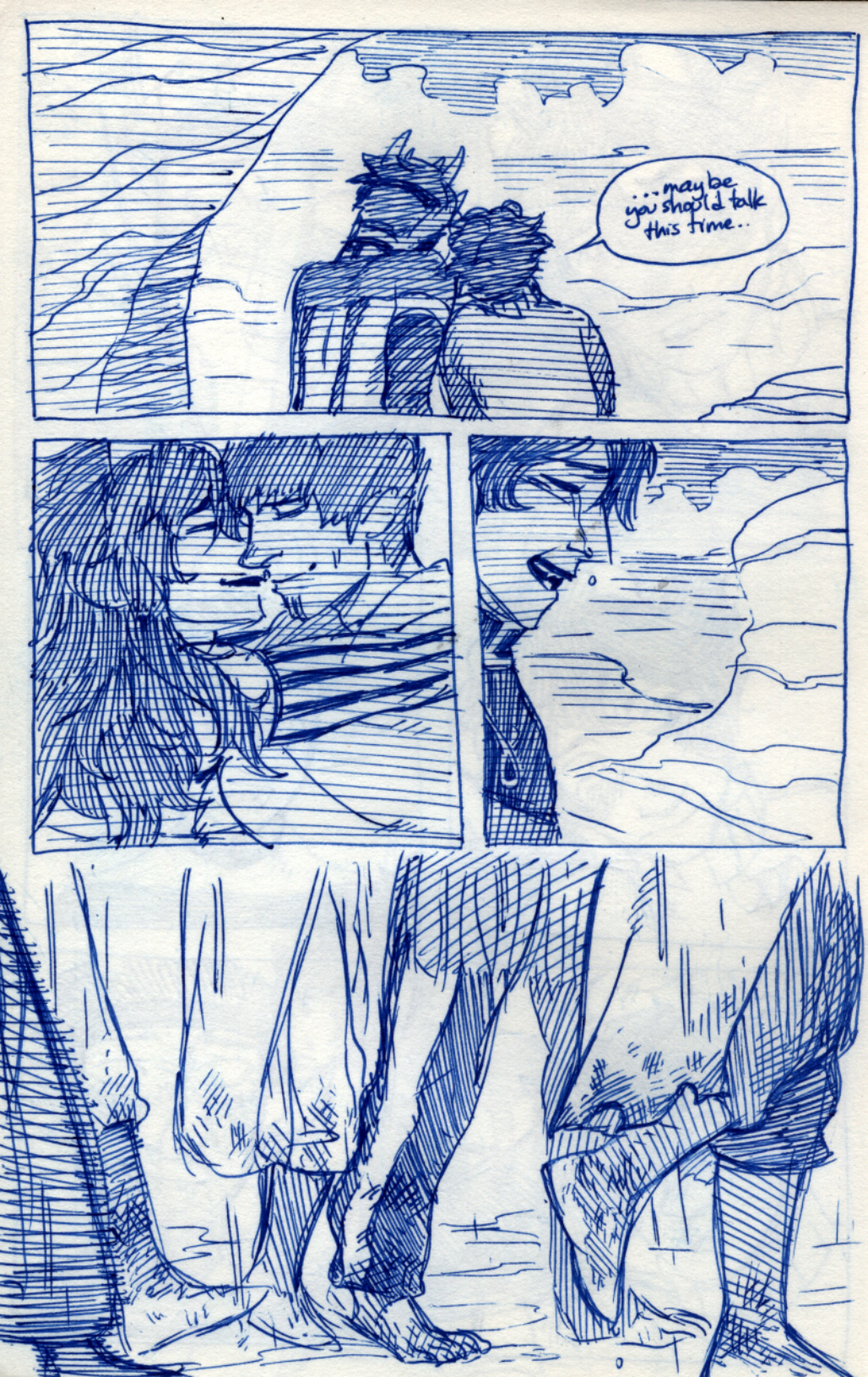

...How long d'you think they're gonna keep that up?
Oh, you know how they are...
Couple hours, then?
Ha!
Maybe in the meantime you should talk to Vantas.
I- what?
...I'm not teasing. You did tell him you would.
...Yeah, I guess I did.
Right.
What are you two talking
Nothing!
Anyway


I mean...
hhh...
uff
so...
You were playing this dumbass game, right?
Started hearing weird noises.
what happened then?
...okay. We don't have to-
shff

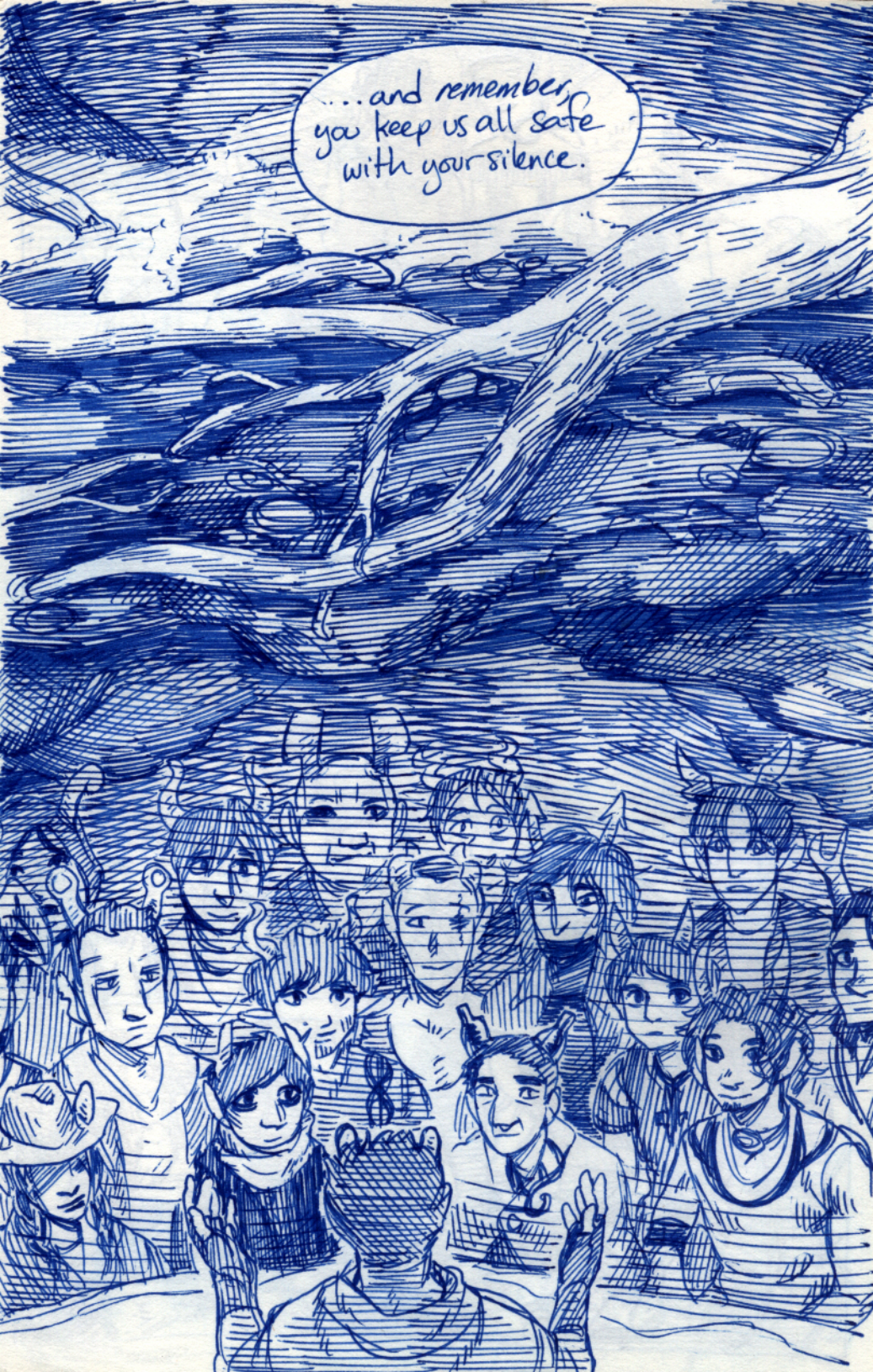


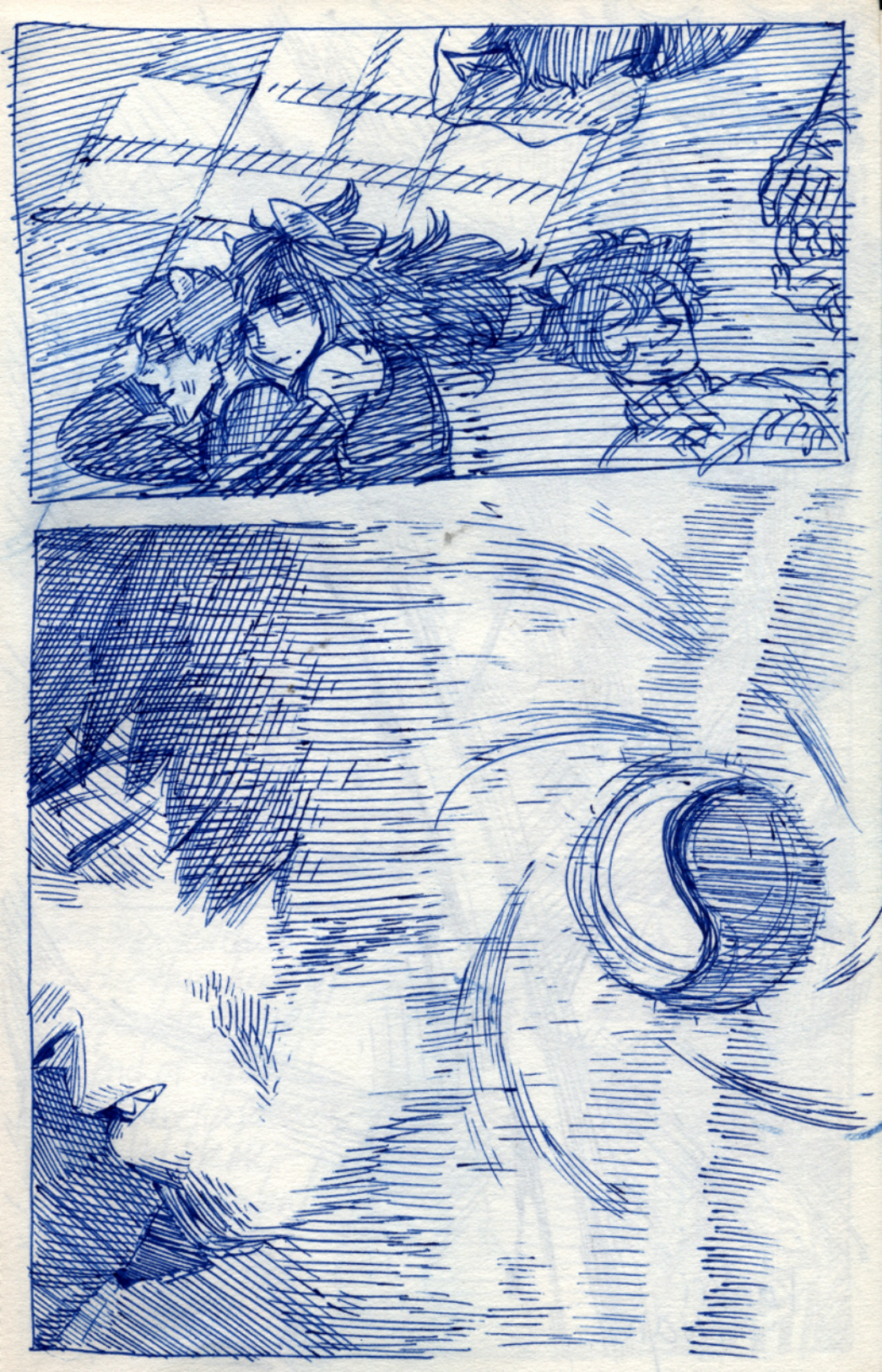


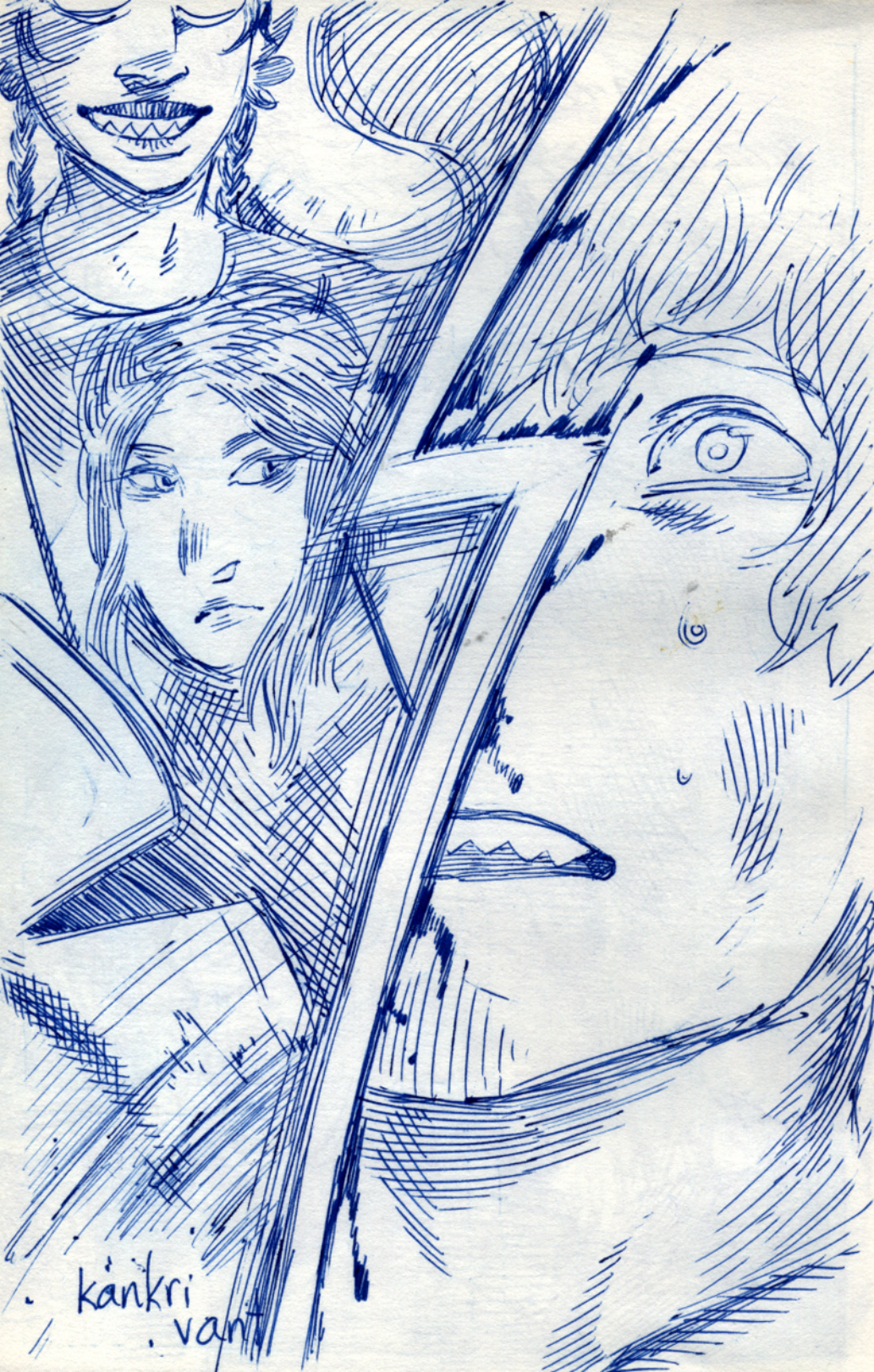


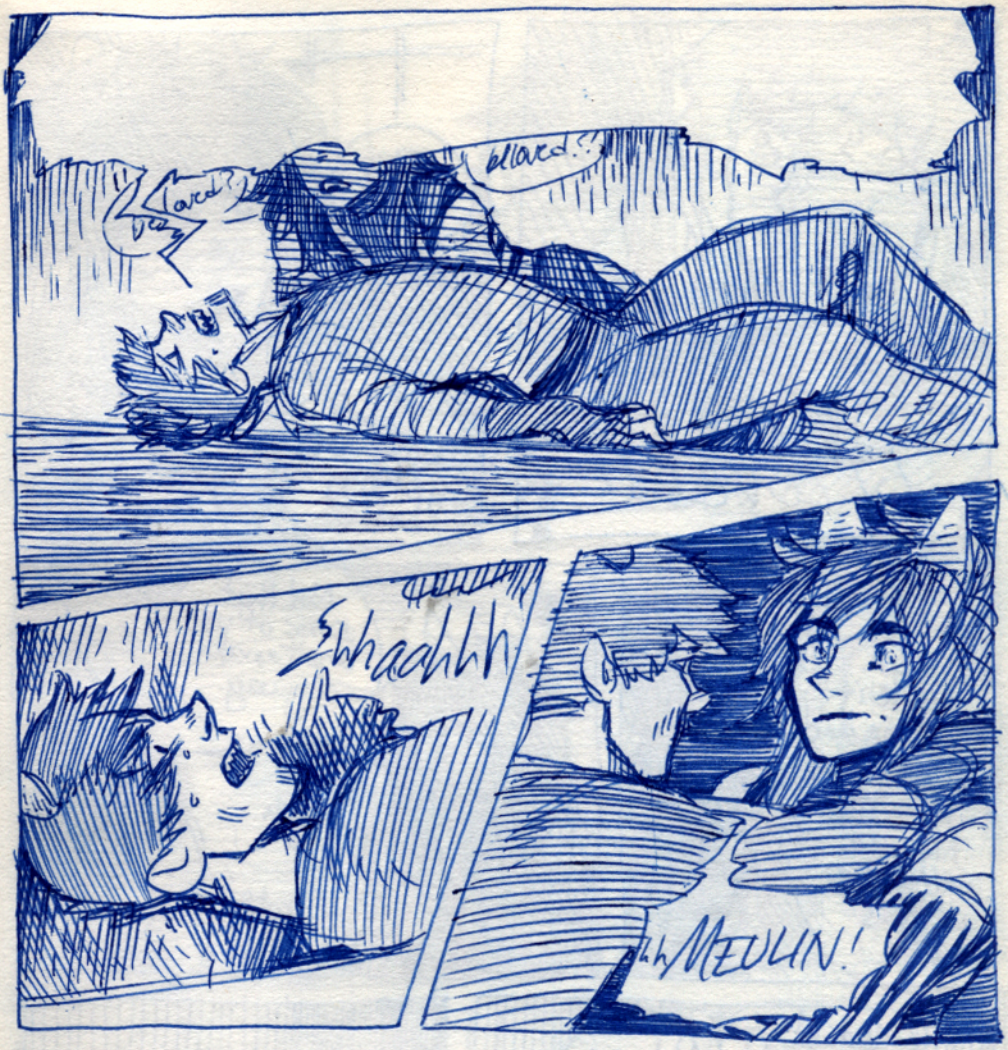

...maybe you should talk this time..



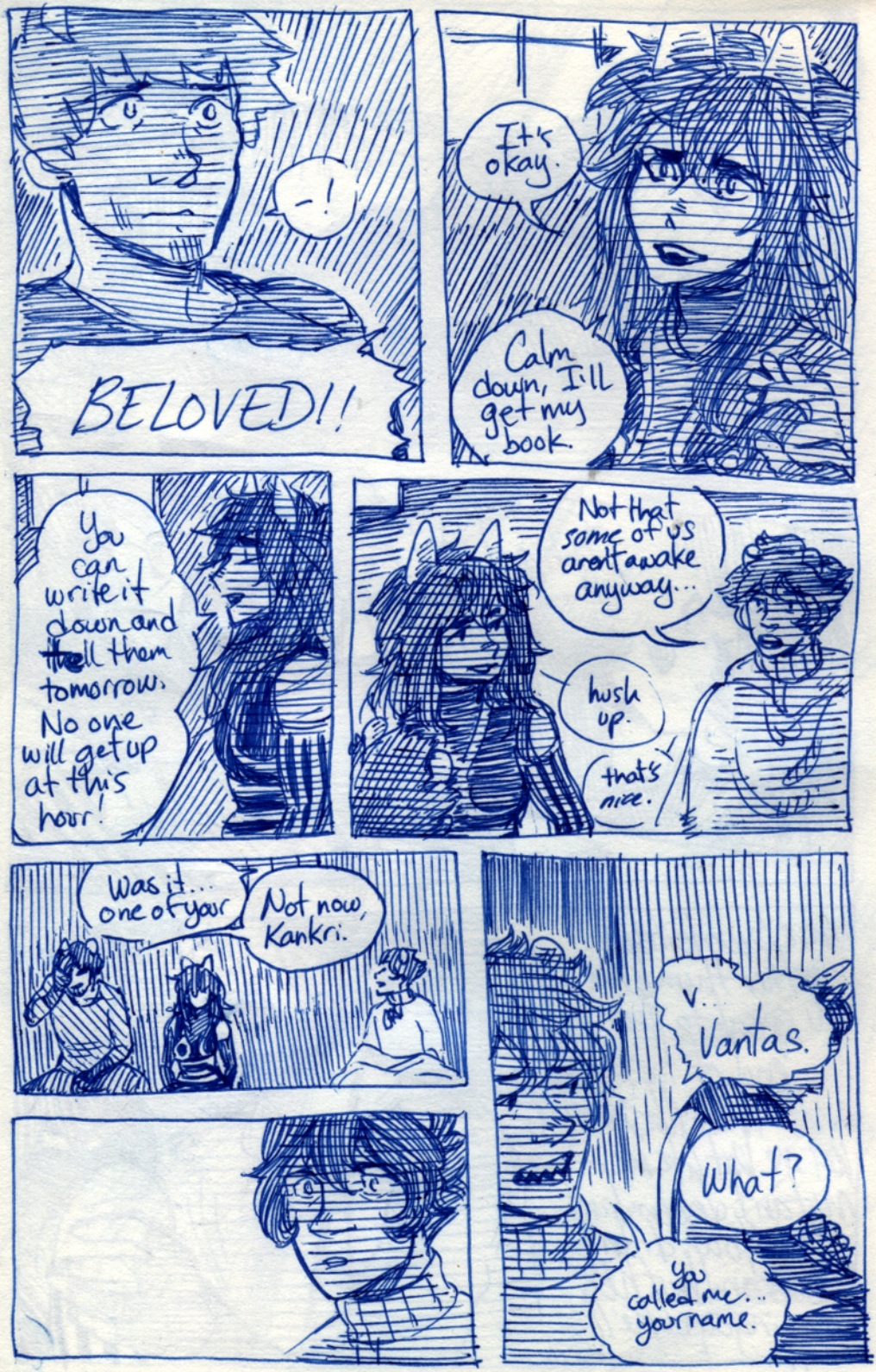

...and remember, you keep us all safe with your silence.

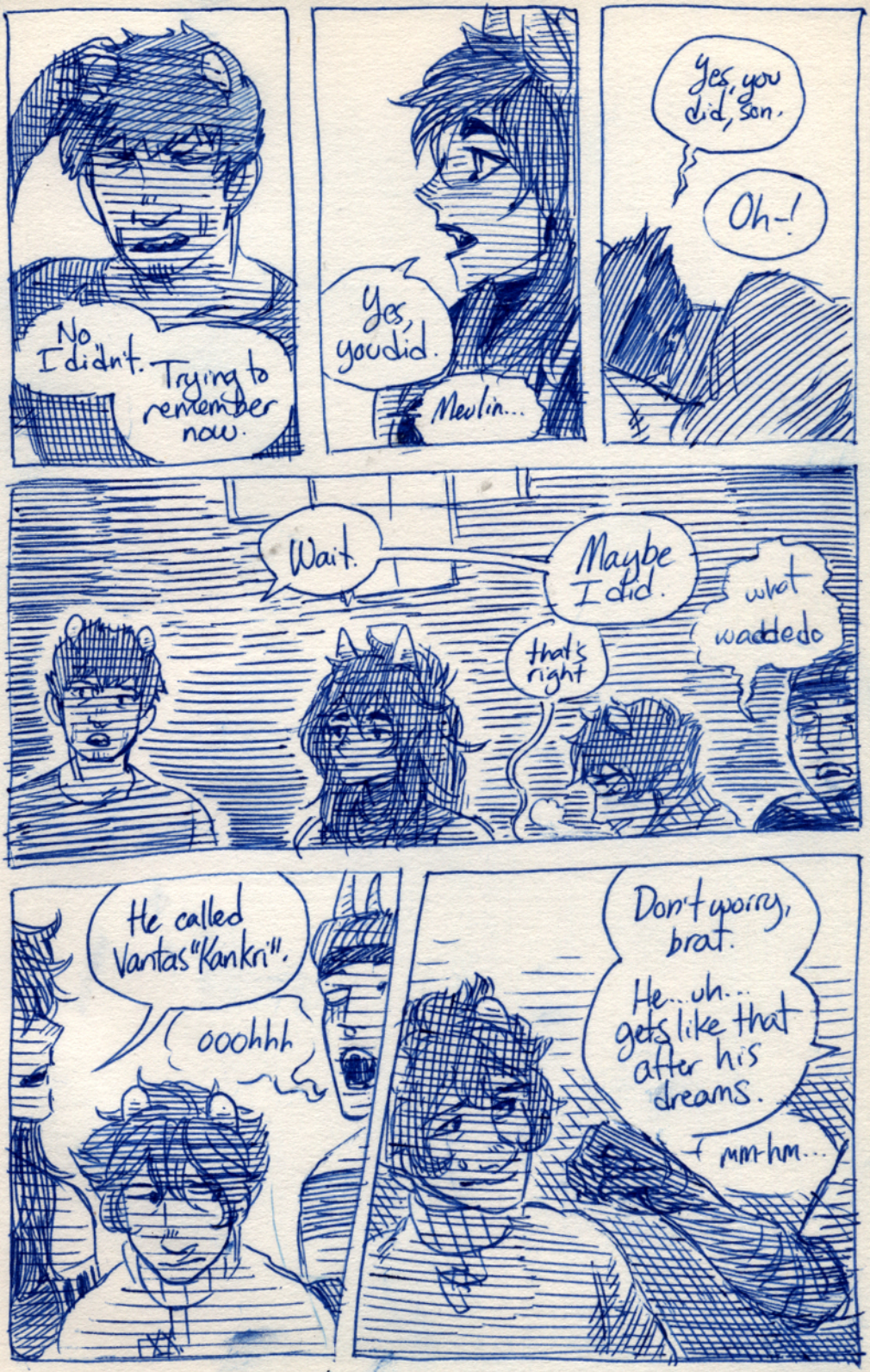


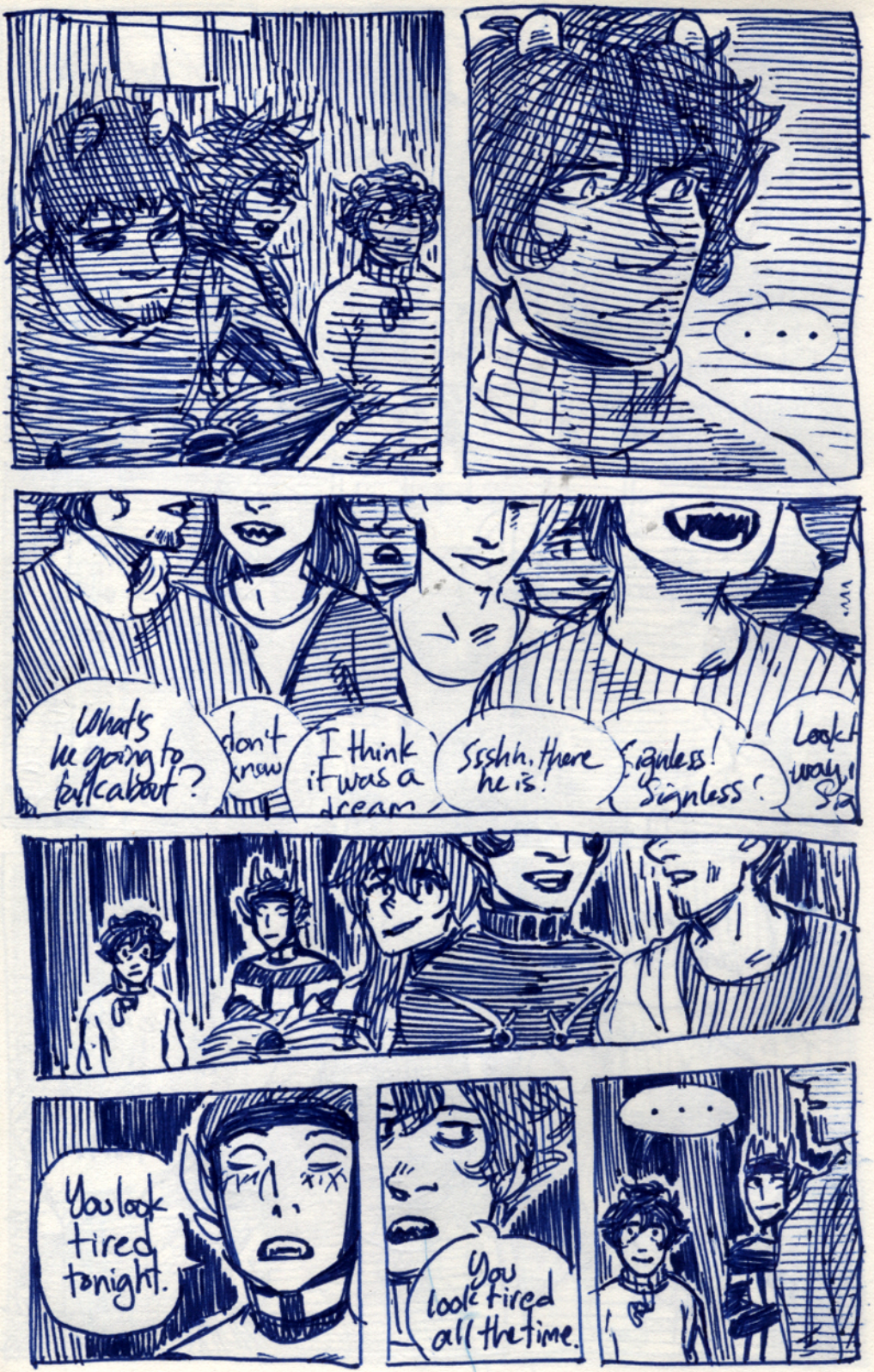

kankri
vant

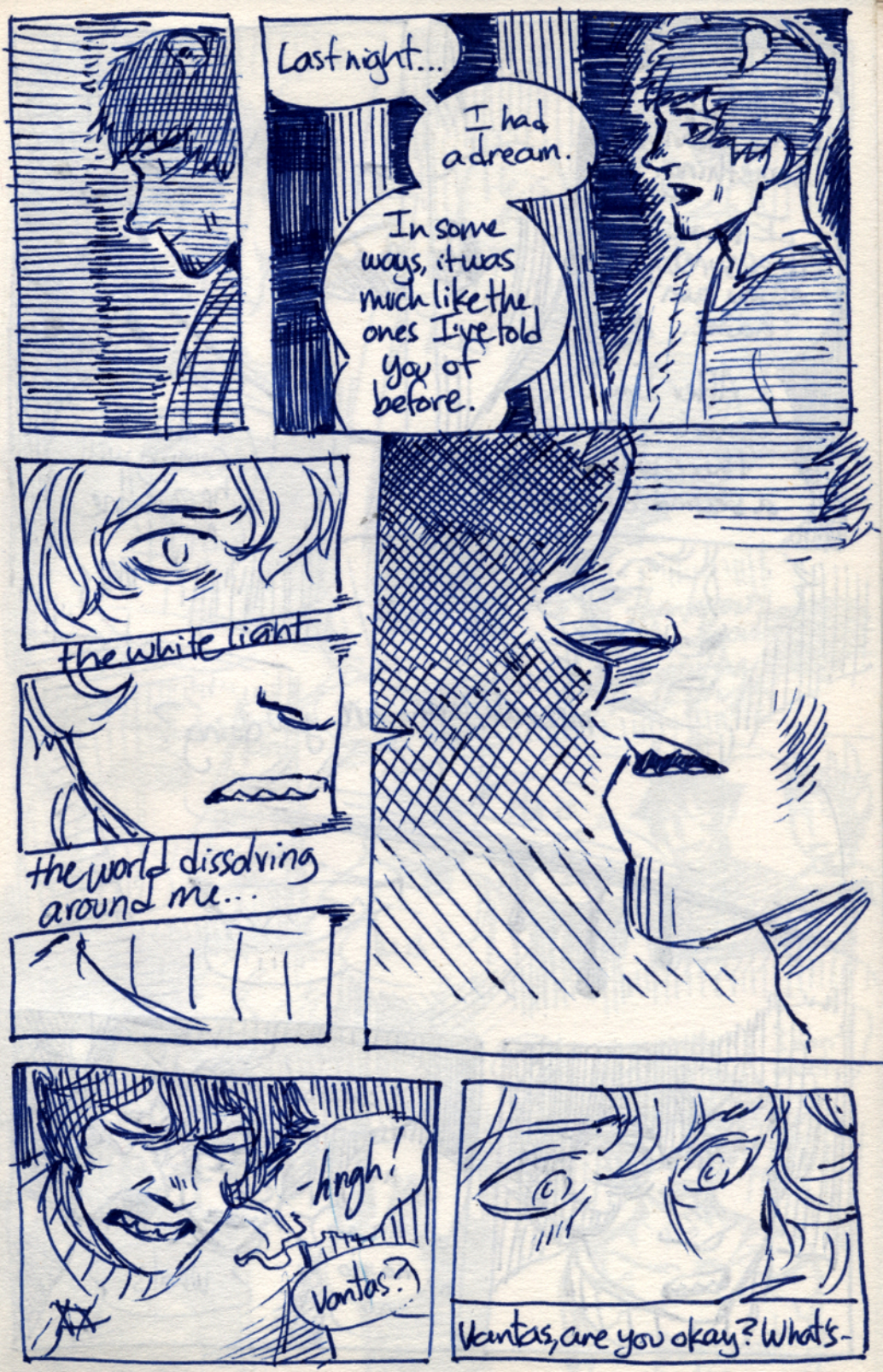


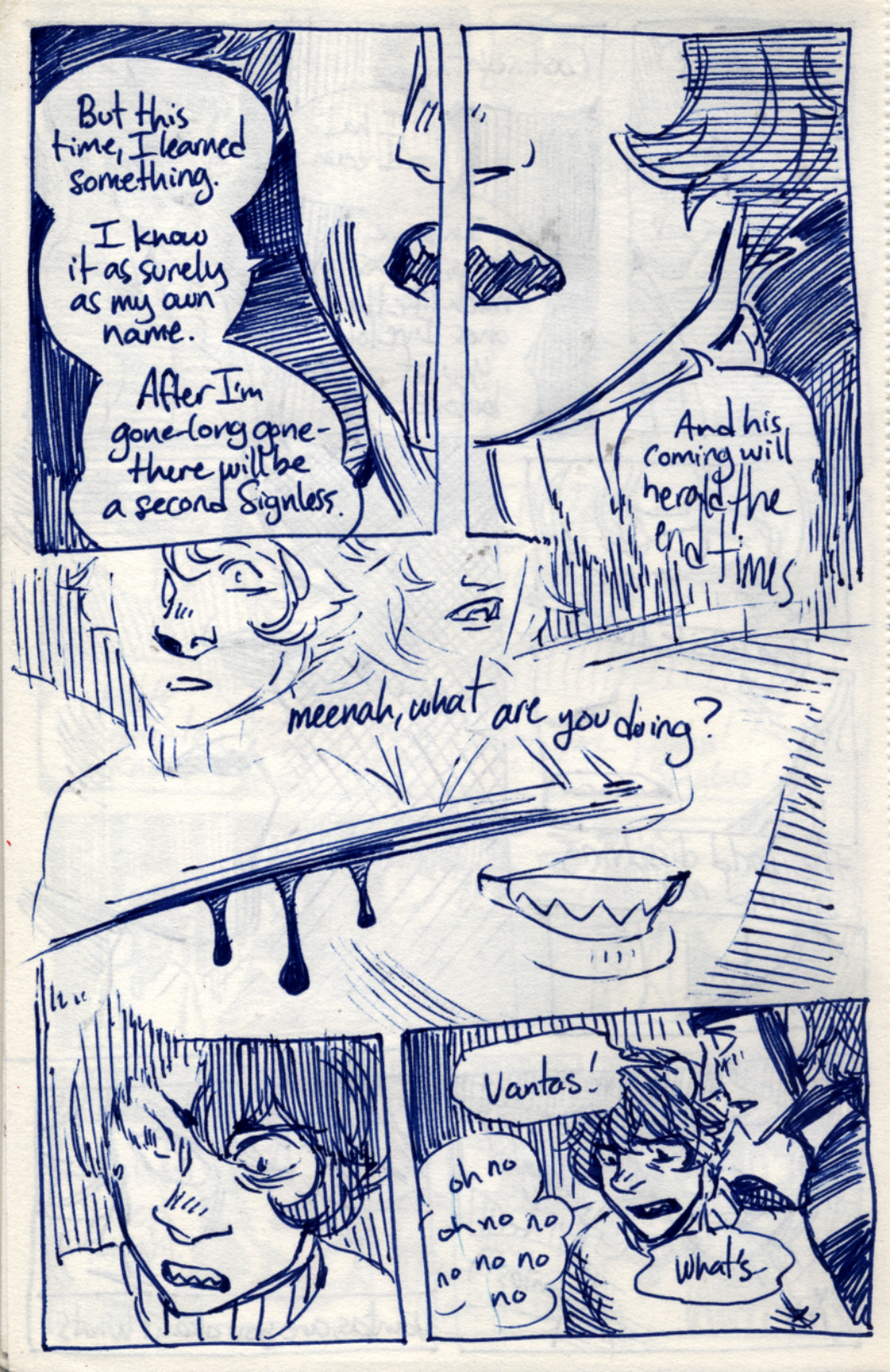
I have to write it down
or gather them here, let
me speak to them all -
the end of the world
and there'll be someone -
not me but like me -
mutant, descendant
somehow, I don't
understand but he's
coming and he'll
tell us what it means


-!
BELOVED!!
It's okay.
Calm down, I'll get my book.
You can write it down and tell them tomorrow. No one will get up at this hour!
Not that some of us aren't awake anyway...
hush up.
that's nice.
Was it... one of your
Not now, Kankri.
V..
Vantas.
What?
You called me... your name.


No I didn't. Trying to remember now.
Yes, you did.
Merlin...
Yes, you did, son.
Oh-!
Wait.
Maybe I did.
that's right
what waddedo
He called Vantas "Kankri".
oooohhh
Don't worry, brat.
He...uh... gets like that after his dreams.
mm-hm...

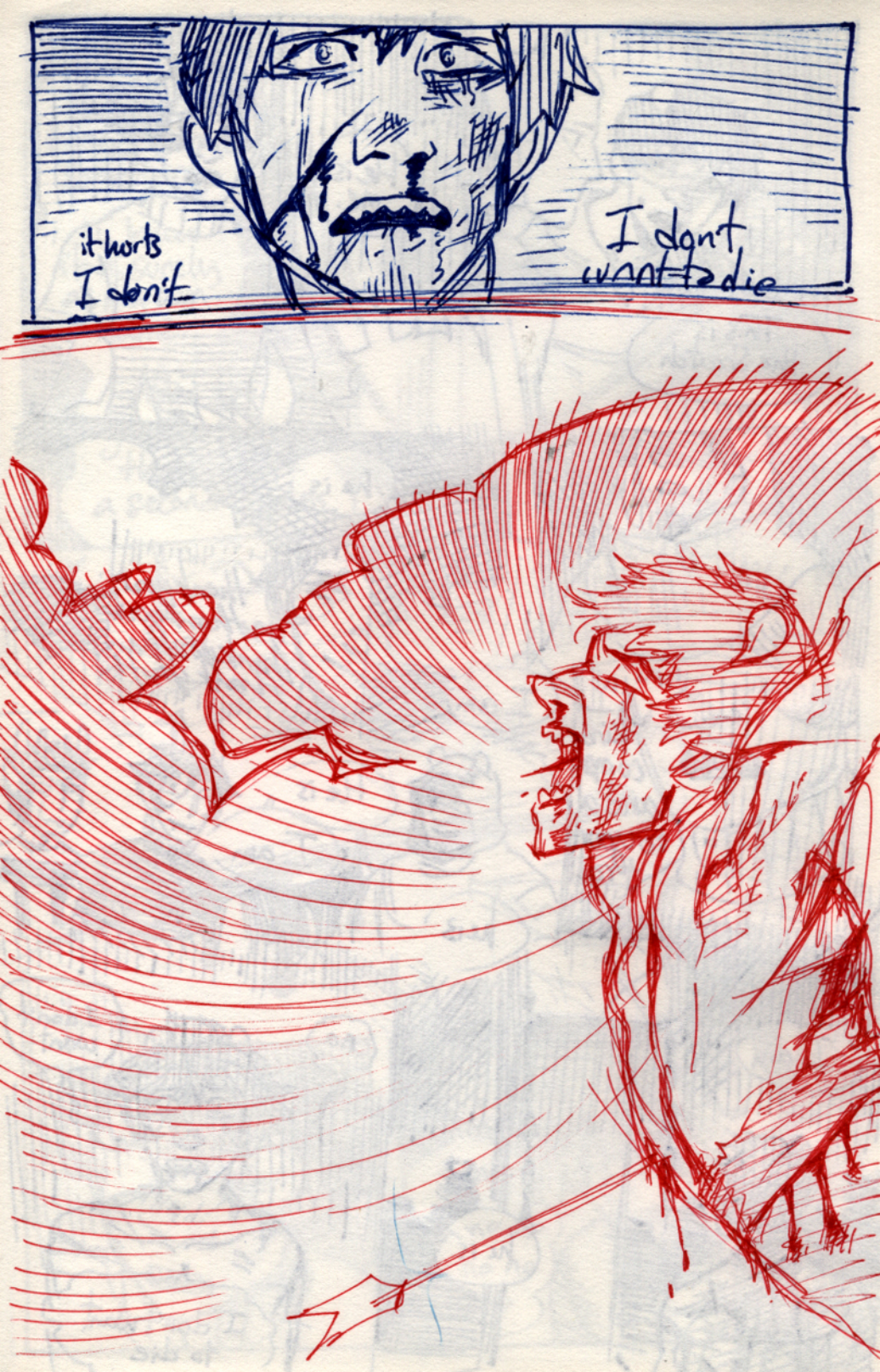

What's he going to tell about?
don't know
I think it was a dream
Sssh. there he is!
Signless! Signless!
Look
way!
You look tired tonight.
You look tired all the time.


Last night...
I had a dream.
In some ways, it was much like the ones I've told you of before.
the white light
the world dissolving around me...
-hngh!
Vantas?
Vantas, are you okay? What's-

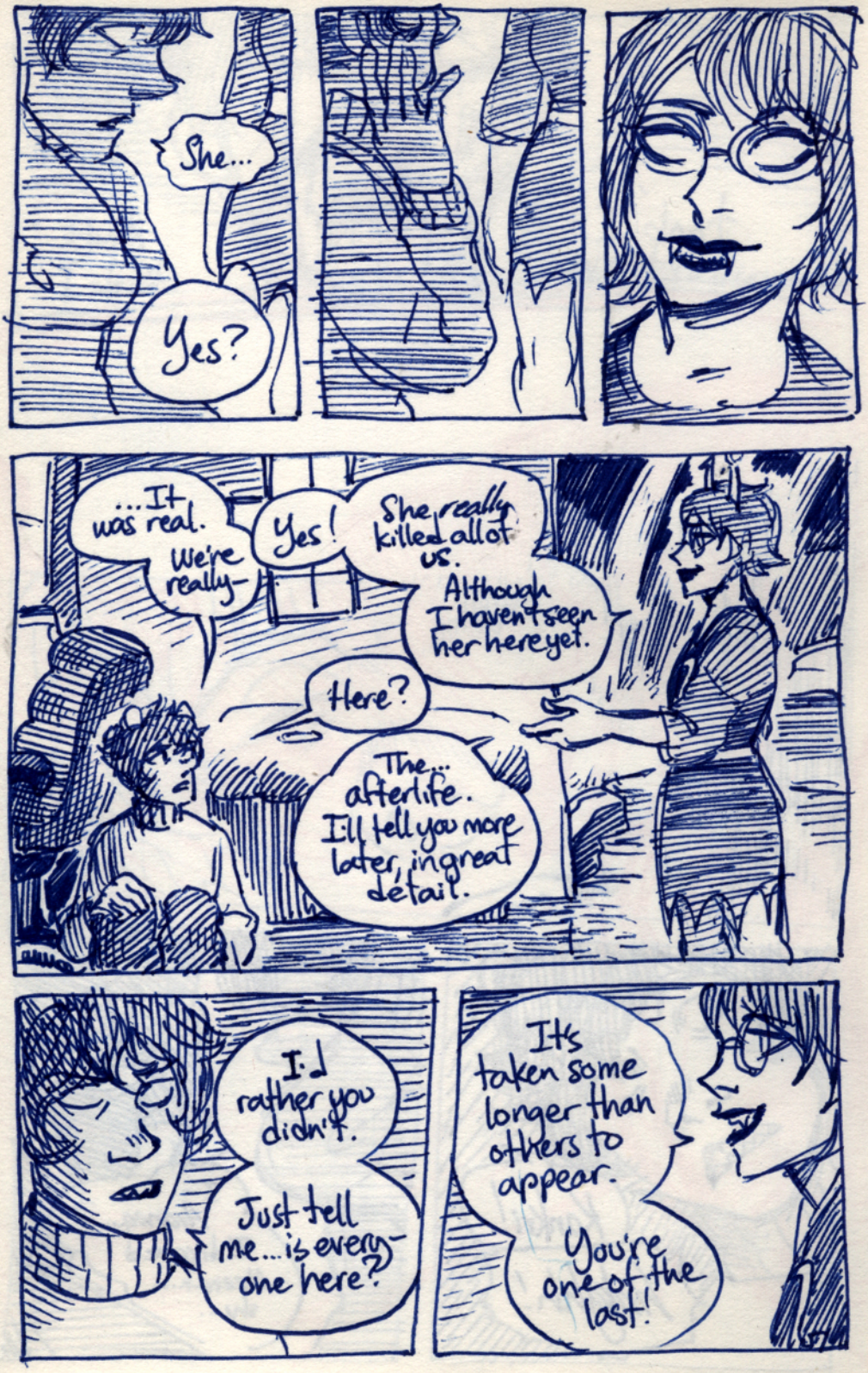

But this time, I learned something.
I know it as surely as my own name.
After I'm gone-long gone-there will be a second Signless.
And his coming will herald the end times
meenah, what are you doing?
Vantas!
oh no
oh no no
no no no
no
What's



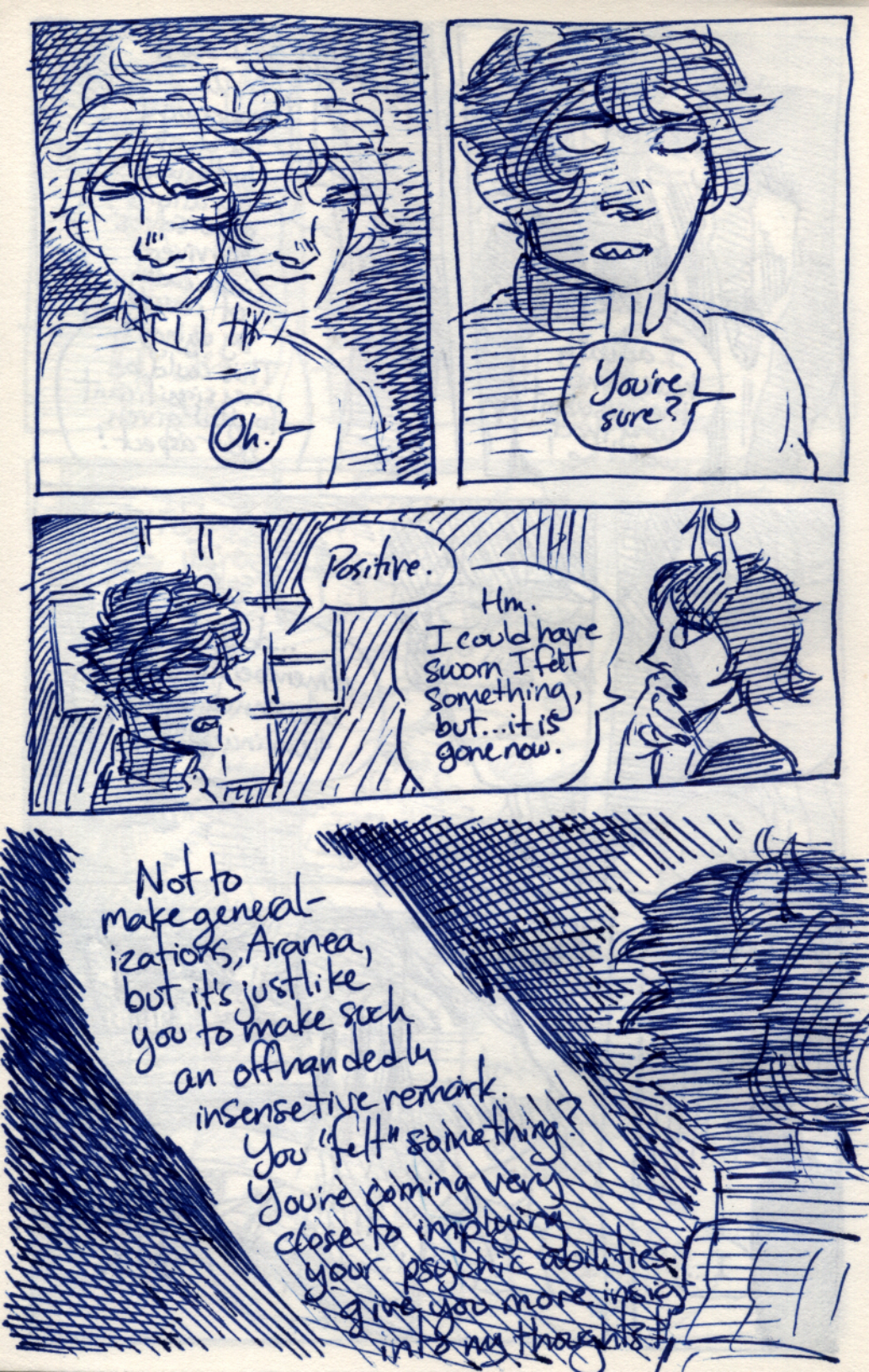
This is the Scratch.
He is me.
he is
I am
He is
I am
he is
I am
he is
no
I don't want-
I don't want to die


it hurts
I don't
I don't
want to die


Kankri!
hnkghh!
I-
Aranea...?
I dreamed
Meenah...
she...


She...
Yes?
...It was real. We're really-
Yes!
She really killed all of us. Although I haven't seen her here yet.
Here?
The... afterlife. I'll tell you more later, in great detail.
I... I'd rather you didn't.
Just tell me... is everyone here?
It's taken some longer than others to appear.
You're one of the last!

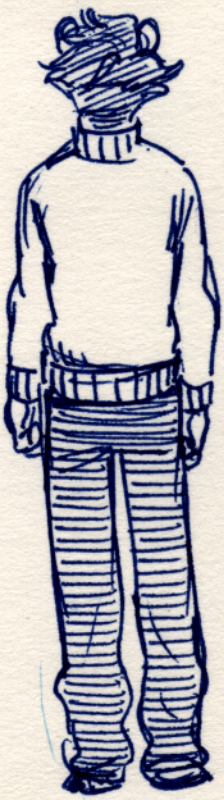

oof
I actually have some theories about why that would be!
As I see it:
We underwent the Scratch, but these iterations of ourselves "survived" (ironically, of course, by dying)!
This could be very significant to you given your aspect!
So...
...do you remember anything between dying and "waking up" here?
...
Just try to recall anything-
I...
!!
-No.


Oh.
You're sure?
Positive.
Hm. I could have sworn I felt something, but...it is gone now.
Not to make generalizations, Aranea, but it's just like you to make such an offhandedly insensetive remark. You "felt" something? You're coming very close to implying your psychic abilities give you more insight into my thoughts!

NO RED SWEATERS

end





ToastyHAT Askblog Event

NO RED SWEATERS

Ask Team Signless or Kankri!

15 answers at most!

Blacklist #NRSNight to avoid!

Read the Thing

check my tags page.



Apart from the infamous "Condesce"?

(A bastardization of our own "Benevolent Icandescence", I assume)

Not really.

This Porrim told a story about... about the signless when he was young, encountering a caliblood (nothighblood, as you so crudely put it), and pacifying his rage, completely, which allowed them to escape.

Not a cerulean or indigo, though.

Oh, yes. Every time he forgets himself and does something just fucking idiotic I feel myself reconsidering the decision to let him stay.

But without us he probably wouldn't survive long, so...

My conscience couldn't take it.

Not only did they burn it but they burned it without my permission!

It's not as though I had any extreme emotional attachment to it, but it was my property!

As for triggers...

#quadrantslurs

#slurs #death

#themorelatedslurs

#mentionsofconcupiscent equipment

#culling!!!!

#blood #buckets etc.

#blood

#seriously

#generalignorance

#dontevenknow whataquadrantedmeans

#so much blood

#violence

#no one even cares

Annoying as hell!

Talks for himself, not other people.

Probably gonna die and take us all with him.

As for him looking like Kankri. Kinda weird.

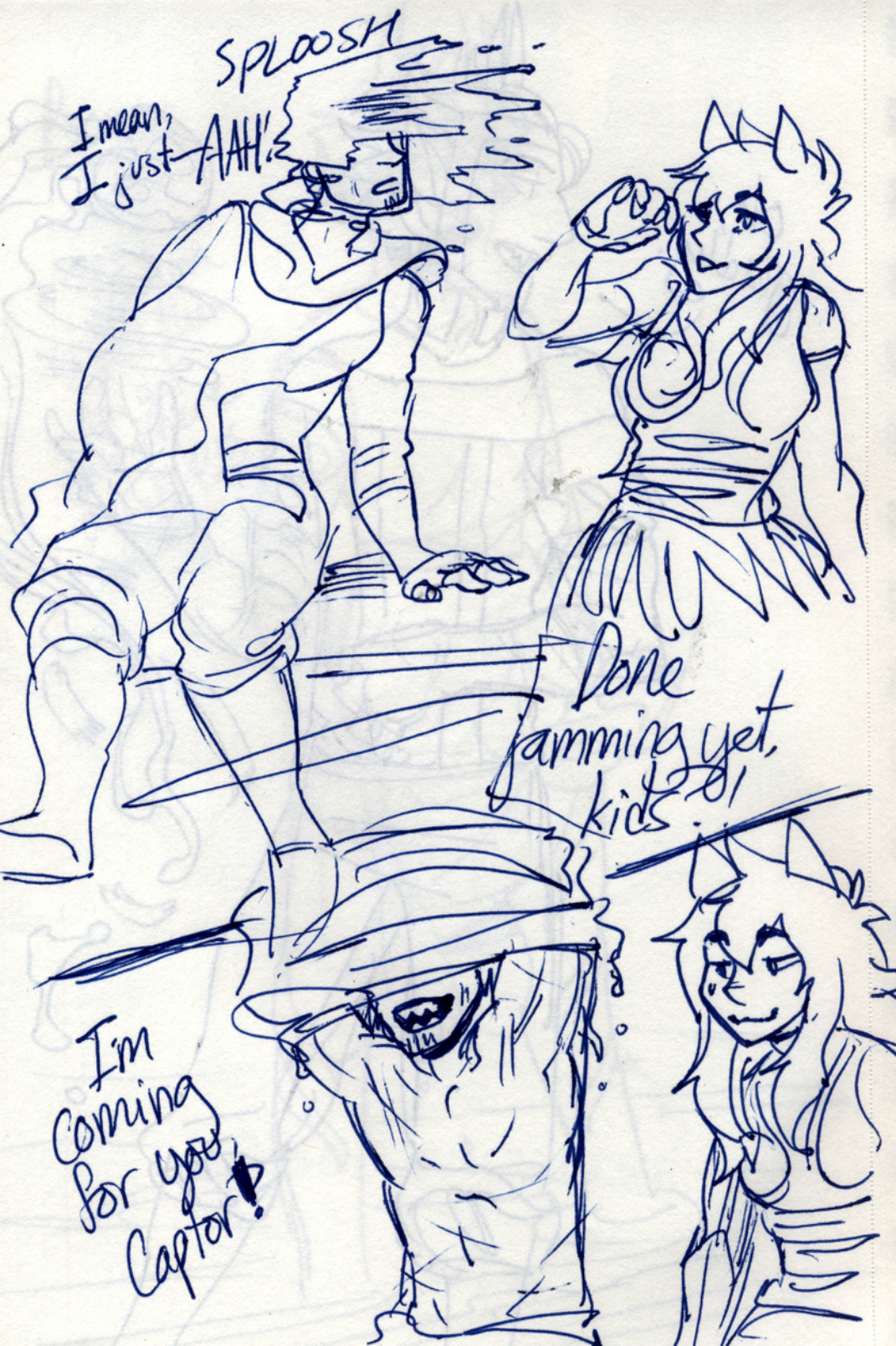
Get them mistaken sometimes.

BONUS

Mitena tell them to get down here and help us, won't you?



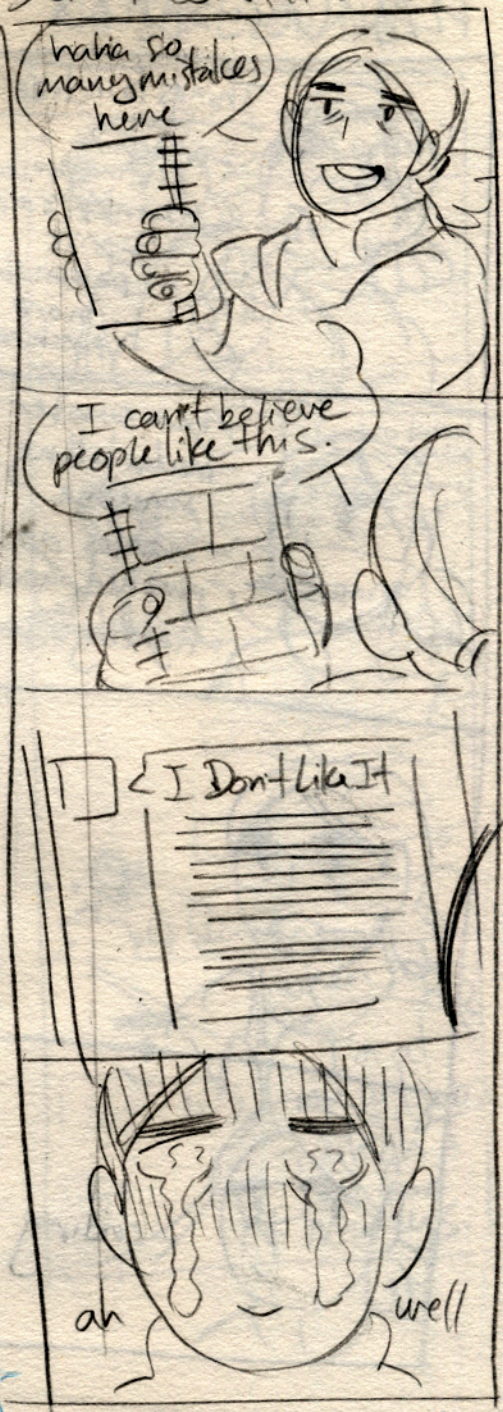

oh, gladly.


SPLOOSH
I mean, I just—AAH!
Done jamming yet, kids?
I'm coming for you, Captor!

IT BEGINS


Summer 2014
Work
I am bored + anxious
OKAY SO WHAT IF KANKRI + TEAM SIGNLESS

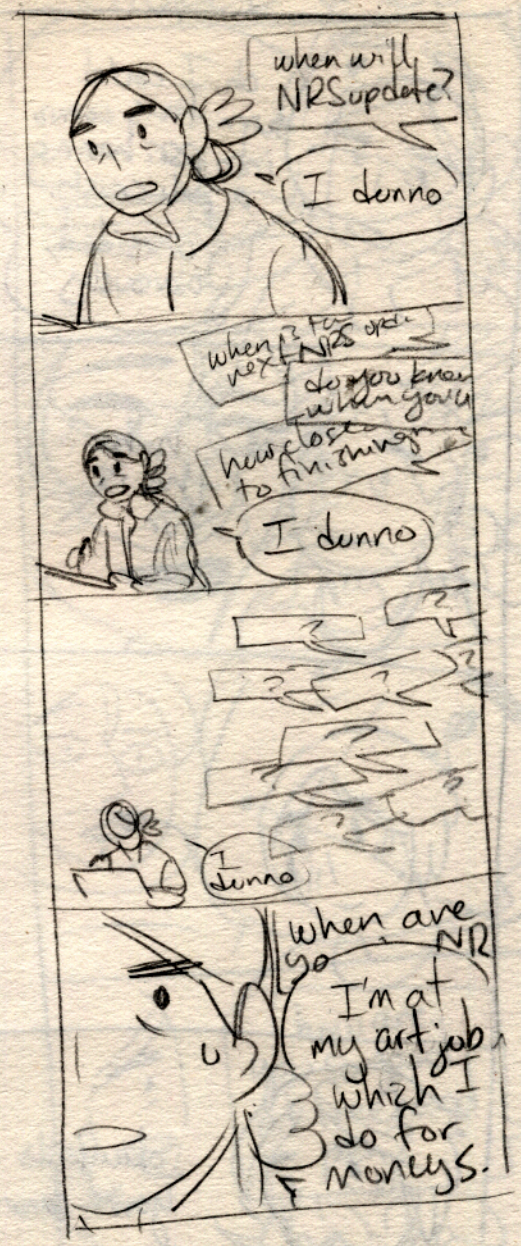
DON'T CONFIRM IT



PLANNING SKILLS



NO SCHEDULE


when will NRS update?
I dunno
when is the next NRS upd.
do you know when you'll have lots of time to finish
I dunno
I dunno
when are you NR
I'm at my art job which I do for moneys.

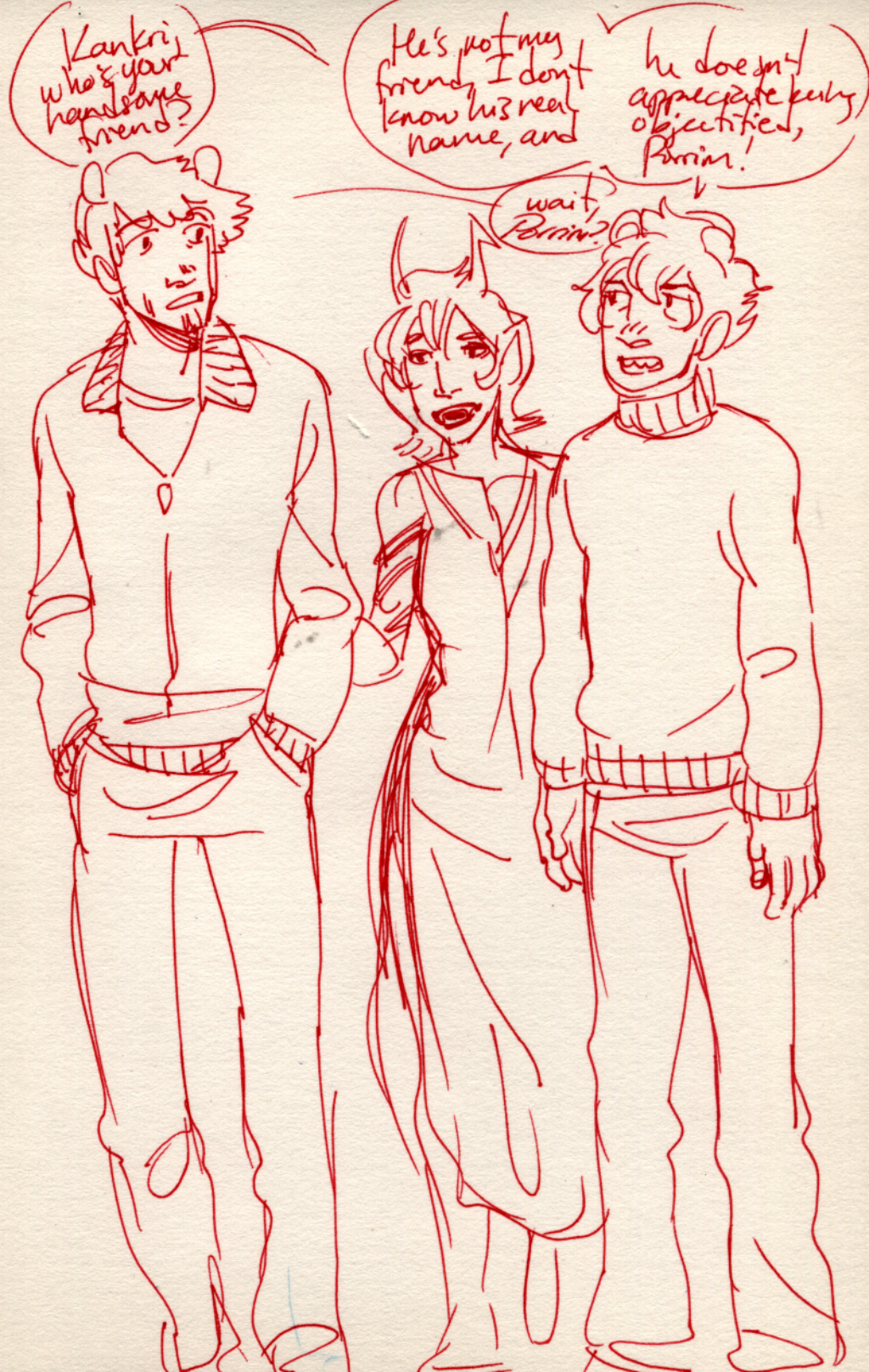
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT



THEY CALL'ER OLD CROOKED-FACE




Reverse NRS:
No Gray Dirty Old Cloaks
What are you doing sleeping outside my hive, hobo?
M-My name is Kanker
NO IT'S NOT


Kankri, who's your handsome friend?
He's not my friend, I don't know his real name, and
he doesn't appreciate being objectified, Porrim!
wait, Porrim?



well hello good lookin

wanna do somethin later together with me

aheh

whoa there chief

not that I couldn't try spades but-

KRAK

know your place.

a shared blood caste...

...does not excuse such familiarity.